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PREFACE

THE author of this book has been informed that some teachers and students who have been making use of his *A Textbook of Modern English History* have expressed a desire for a work of similar character but of different emphasis. In *A Textbook of Modern English History* an attempt is made to present both the political and the economic aspects of the subject. This has met the requirements of a large number of teachers of history; others, however, prefer to use separate textbooks for political and for economic history. For the latter subject the author has already issued his *English Economic History*; the present work is an attempt to deal with British political and military history for the period 1783-1914. Some account of Dominion and colonial development has been included.

The general plan which has been followed in other books of this series has been retained. Summaries of the chapters are appended for the convenience of students who wish to make use of the book for examination purposes, and sketch-maps are given when required for the illustration of the text.

G. W. S.

May, 1940.

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INTRODUCTION

ENGLISH POLITICAL LIFE IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

ENGLISH political life in the eighteenth century was dominated by the aristocracy of the country. The two political parties, Whig and Tory, which had emerged towards the close of the Stuart period, differed from one another chiefly in their attitude towards the monarchy. The Tories were the political successors of the supporters of the Stuart kings, and, if by the eighteenth century the party was no longer pledged to implicit belief in the Divine Right of Kings, it still tended to uphold the royal prerogative. The Whigs, on the other hand, as the representatives of the parliamentary party of the seventeenth century, stood for the supremacy of Parliament in the state, a supremacy which was established by the Revolution of 1688-9 and reaffirmed by the accession of the House of Hanover to the throne in 1714, in accordance with the terms of the Act of Settlement of 1701.

Both parties represented the landed interest of the country. Every member of the House of Lords was a great landowner, and the possession of an estate of substantial size was an essential qualification for membership of the House of Commons. Neither party had any leaning towards democracy.

In the seventeenth century the Church of England had in the main stood by the Crown, while those who dissented from the Church were usually to be found opposed to the pretensions of the monarchy. It is not to be assumed that eighteenth-century Tories were invariably Churchmen, nor that all Whigs were Dissenters; nevertheless, the Tory party stood for the maintenance of the privileged position of the Church, while the Whigs advocated, and on the whole secured, toleration for Protestant Dissenters.

George I, the Elector of Hanover, became King of Great Britain in 1714. He was not very much interested in the affairs of his new kingdom, and neither he nor his son took any great part in the direction of public business. Nevertheless, he understood that he owed his advancement to the Whigs. The

Tories, even if most of them were no longer active partisans of the exiled Stuarts, would not have opposed their restoration. It was inevitable that George should entrust the government of the country to Whig ministers, and throughout his reign and that of his son Whig ministers directed public affairs. The Tories, on account of their Jacobite connections, appeared to be permanently excluded from office.

This was not to be the case. Lord Bolingbroke, a prominent Tory politician, realised that his party could not expect to recover political power until it was able to produce evidence of its fidelity to the reigning house, and he devoted the latter part of his life to building up the New Tory party, which professed loyalty to the House of Hanover, accepted the Revolution settlement, and disavowed Stuart connections. Time and circumstance were in his favour. However faithful the older Tories might be to the cause of the Pretender, they were bound to die out, and the younger men who replaced them were disinclined to devote themselves to a lost cause, preferring a political creed which looked to the future rather than to the past. By the time of the accession of George III Jacobitism had passed into history; the Tories were as ready as the Whigs to serve the reigning monarch.

George I and George II had been German Kings of Great Britain; George III was the first of the Hanoverian kings who was an Englishman. "I glory in the name of Briton," he announced to his people. From the beginning of his reign he was gravely concerned at the diminution which the royal power had suffered in the time of his grandfather and great-grandfather. He determined to take a more active part in the work of government than his predecessors had done and to recover for the Crown the power, influence, and prestige that it had lost. In his view the Whig party was responsible for the decline of monarchical authority, and he was ready to welcome Tory aid in overthrowing the group which had monopolised the administration for half a century.

Moreover, once the equal loyalty of both parties to the Crown had been established, there were other reasons for the King to lean towards the Tories. By the nature of their principles they were more inclined than the Whigs to support the prerogative and to show deference and even devotion to the person of the monarch. Their exclusion from office in the early years of the period had not been owing to any failing in their attachment to

these principles, which had merely been applied to the wrong monarch. From the beginning of the reign of George III the attitude of the Tories to the Crown was similar to that of their ancestors towards the Stuarts.

Yet if George III was prepared to select Tory ministers he had no intention of becoming the tool of the Tories as the earlier Georges had been of the Whigs. He hoped to secure for himself a position of commanding influence in English politics, so that he might possess a dominant and final voice in the settlement of public affairs. To this end he devoted attention to the building up of a political party—the King's Friends—which should be independent of Whigs and Tories alike, and should be subservient to himself. If, as he assumed, the Whig and Tory parties would in general be antagonistic to one another, the control of affairs in the House of Commons would lie with the King's Friends, and so with the King himself.

During the first few years of his reign George was occupied in the establishment of his system. At his direction his Friends co-operated with, and then turned against, one group of ministers after another, so that there were five or six changes of ministry in the first ten years of the reign. In 1770 Lord North became Prime Minister, with the support of the King's Friends. During the twelve years of North's premiership the control of affairs lay with the King. North was by no means without ability, and some of his measures are deserving of commendation. But the general character of his administration stands condemned by reason of his subservience to the King. The period was neither happy nor prosperous. The American quarrel developed into the American war, and the colonies were lost. War with America developed into war with several countries of Europe, and, as indicated below, Great Britain had to accept in 1783 the most humiliating treaty in her modern history. Blame for these disasters must be assigned to the King, but his minister also cannot escape censure.

North, tired of the unsatisfactory nature of his position, and faced with steadily growing opposition in the House of Commons, resigned office in 1782. The King was taken by surprise. He had been ready to maintain North in office for the rest of his life, and had at no time considered the possibility of having to appoint a successor to his docile Prime Minister. The Whigs at this time, who formed the Opposition, were not a united party. The Rockingham faction represented the Whig

oligarchy which had dominated the country before the King's accession; Lord Shelburne, the leader of the other section, was less hostile than the Rockingham Whigs to the personal government of the King. George invited Shelburne to form a ministry, but he was unable to do so, and the King, to his great dismay, had to entrust the government of the country to the party he hated.

Rockingham became Prime Minister in March, 1782, and Shelburne accepted office under him as Secretary of State. The other Secretary of State was Charles James Fox. The ministry lasted little more than three months, during which period, however, some important victories were gained in the concluding stages of the war. Rodney defeated De Grasse in the Battle of the Saints, a great attack on Gibraltar was repulsed, and a treaty was made with the Marathas—events which could not be without influence in the framing of the terms of the treaty of peace. But on 1st July, 1782, Rockingham died.

The alliance of the two groups of Whigs had been maintained with difficulty, for Fox disliked and distrusted Shelburne. The King's invitation to Shelburne to form a ministry broke up the alliance, and Fox led his section into opposition. Several of Rockingham's colleagues continued to hold office under Shelburne. William Pitt, second son of the Pitt who had directed the Seven Years War, became Chancellor of the Exchequer. The principal achievement of the ministry was the conclusion of peace, but when the terms of the Treaty of Versailles were debated in the House of Commons a vote of censure was carried, and Shelburne and his colleagues resigned.

The defeat of the ministry was achieved as the result of a political alliance between groups of Tories and Whigs led, respectively, by North and Fox. This coalition was condemned as utterly unprincipled, for North could not evade his responsibility for the disasters in America, and for years he had had no severer critic than Fox. But for the moment the coalition held a commanding position in Parliament. The King, who detested it, made every effort to secure the establishment of a ministry without having recourse to it, but in vain. For five weeks the country was without an administration, and George at length directed the coalition to take office.

The Duke of Portland, who accepted the office of Prime Minister, was a nonentity, and the real chiefs of the new ministry were Fox and North, who held the Secretaryships of

State. From the beginning the King was resolved to get rid of the ministry as soon as opportunity should offer. The chance came with Fox's attempt to reorganise the government of the East India Company's territories in India. By his Bill the management of Indian affairs, including appointments to the Indian service, was to be vested in seven commissioners who were to be appointed for four years. Though future appointments were to be made by the Crown, the original commissioners were named in the Bill; they were all members of Fox's party, which by the passage of the Bill would receive an enormous accession of wealth and patronage.

Fox's India Bill met with opposition from many quarters, but it was carried in the House of Commons. In the Lords, however, the influence of the King was exerted against it. To Lord Temple George sent a message in which he stated that every peer who voted for the Bill would be regarded by him as his personal enemy. This unconstitutional proceeding was effective; the Lords rejected the Bill. Next day the King dismissed the coalition ministry and invited William Pitt to become Prime Minister.

CHAPTER I

PITT—IN THE YEARS OF PEACE until 1793

WILLIAM PITT, the second son of William Pitt, Earl of Chatham, was born in 1759. Delicate as a boy, he was not sent to school. At the age of fourteen he entered Pembroke Hall, Cambridge, and in 1780 he was called to the bar. In 1781 he entered the House of Commons as member for Appleby, and in the following year he became Chancellor of the Exchequer in the Shelburne ministry. Upon the dismissal of the Fox-North coalition in 1783 Pitt, though only twenty-four years old, was invited by the King to fill the office of Prime Minister, which he retained until 1801. His second ministry began in 1804 and lasted till his death in January, 1806. When he died, at the age of forty-six, he had been Prime Minister for nearly half of his short life.

Until 1793 Great Britain was at peace; after that year it was at war with France. Pitt's political career thus falls into two parts, and this chapter deals with his administration before the outbreak of war.

When he became Prime Minister he was faced by a hostile majority in the House of Commons. The opposition jeered at him as the head of "the mince-pie administration" (because it was "not likely to last long after Christmas"). In divisions he was defeated daily, and his opponents tried to force him to resign. The constitutional course of action for a defeated government is to resign or to dissolve Parliament, and, if it fails to obtain a majority in the new Parliament, to resign forthwith. But in 1783 this principle was not so clearly established as it is to-day, and Pitt refused either to resign or to advise the King to dissolve Parliament. He thought that an immediate general election would go against him, but that, in a few weeks or months, public opinion would change and he would obtain a majority. He was right. He held on for some time in spite of defeat, and when the election was held the Whigs lost a very large number of seats. Tories and King's Friends gave Pitt so substantial a following in the House of Commons that he was firmly established in power.

Pitt's victory was not a matter for surprise. The Fox-North coalition had not been popular; the India Bill which had been rejected by the House of Lords through the King's influence had been designed to serve the interests of neither India nor Great Britain, but only those of the Whig party. Nor was the coalition likely to develop into a firm and lasting political alliance; the Whigs disliked the connection with North, whom they regarded, rather unjustly, as the author of the policy which had resulted in disaster in America, while the Tories frowned upon Fox's attempt to limit the King's prerogative. Moreover, the alliance of two politicians who for years had been in bitter antagonism to one another seemed to demonstrate the insincerity of those engaged in the political game. Pitt, on the other hand, showed unexampled courage in the opening weeks of his ministry, and, above all, he bore a name associated with victory and national glory.

Like Lord North, he was supported by George III throughout his term of office, but he was not subservient to the King as North had been. The real ruler while North was Prime Minister was the King. Pitt, and not the King, was now the director of national policy, and, although he sometimes yielded to the King on minor points, he would have resigned rather than give way if he differed from the monarch on a vital matter. (This actually happened in 1801, when George refused to agree to Catholic Emancipation, which Pitt regarded as essential to the completion of his Irish policy.) The King had freed himself from the domination of the Fox-North coalition by supporting Pitt, but at the price of abandoning his system of personal government. His dependence upon Pitt led to the gradual extinction of the King's Friends as a separate political group; they became merged in the party of supporters of the Government.

Pitt, like his father, despised the corruption which was a characteristic of eighteenth-century political life; though his private means were small he refused to accept a lucrative sinecure post, the Clerkship of the Pells, which became vacant soon after his accession to office. As a war minister Chatham was greater than his son, for though Pitt proved to be adequate to his task in the conduct of the French War he lacked the genius by which his father brought about the triumph of Great Britain in the Seven Years War. Pitt was like Walpole in preferring peace to war, but, when war was inevitable, he, unlike Walpole,

prosecuted it with vigour and determination. He differed also from Walpole in his readiness to propose substantial political and social reforms. He carried on the movement towards free trade of which the first faint beginnings can be traced back to Walpole. He had read Adam Smith's remarkable book, *The Wealth of Nations*, which was published in 1776, and he was convinced by its theory, although it is probable that he, like Walpole, regarded free trade as an ideal which would never be completely realised.

The immediate task before Pitt was that of restoring national prosperity and national prestige after the disasters of the American War. The National Debt stood at nearly £250,000,000, a figure without precedent. The Civil List was in arrear. National credit was low; the price of Government stock in the city of London was no more than fifty-seven. Taxation was burdensome, and smuggling was prevalent round the coasts. Year by year before Pitt's accession to office the budget failed to balance. The position could be saved and national bankruptcy averted only by a statesman who was prepared to reconsider the whole basis of national finance. Pitt proved adequate to the task. He was inclined to distrust the whole theory of Mercantilism, which regarded the regulation of trade and the maintenance of favourable balances of trade as essential to national prosperity. With Adam Smith he realised what the Mercantilists would not admit—that volume of trade was in itself advantageous, and that an increase in trade was beneficial to both buyer and seller. Their interests, in fact, were not opposed, but were identical. To sweep away the mass of duties which restricted trade was out of the question. Had he proposed such a course Pitt would have failed to retain the popular confidence on which he relied. The nation was not prepared for such a change for another sixty years.

But Pitt made many substantial reductions in indirect taxation. He lowered the duties on tea and spirits, and, in order to reduce the profits and increase the risks of smuggling, he secured the passing of the Hovering Act, which authorised the seizure of vessels which were "hovering" off the coast with cargoes of tea and spirits. He extended the system of bonded warehouses which had been begun by Walpole. He simplified the schedules of customs and excise duties, which hitherto had been so complex as to be unintelligible even to the officers charged with the duty of enforcing them. To increase the

revenue he devised taxes on a number of articles of luxury—on servants and racehorses, on hackney coaches, on gold and silver plate, on silk and ribbons, and on windows. The tax on windows is indefensible on modern principles, since the admission of sunlight to a house is now regarded as essential to the maintenance of health, so that such an impost would be a tax upon health. But houses with six windows or less were exempt, and the tax had at least the merit of being roughly proportionate to the means of the people who paid it.

In the early years of his ministry, before the effect of his measures could be felt, Pitt was forced to raise money by loan. Hitherto, Government loans had been raised among the friends of ministers on terms which were more profitable to the lenders than to the state. Pitt ordered that loans should be put out to public tender, so that money might be borrowed on terms most favourable to the public interest. In 1787 he established the Consolidated Fund. Before this time various sources of national revenue had been assigned to meet separate items of expenditure, so that public accounts were unnecessarily complicated; with the establishment of the Consolidated Fund all receipts were paid into it and all payments made from it.

Pitt attacked the burden of the National Debt by establishing a sinking fund. The sum of one million pounds was to be paid annually to commissioners, who were to use it for the purchase of Government stock. This stock was not to be cancelled, but was to continue to bear interest which would be paid to the commissioners. This money, like the annual million, was to be used in the acquisition of further stock. In course of time the whole of the stock would be in the hands of the commissioners; it would then be cancelled. The scheme was to be commended as indicating a determination to pay off the debt, but it was financially sound only while the money was raised by taxation and without having recourse to fresh borrowing. If loans had to be raised, either in peace or war, the debt would be increased as fast as the fund.

Pitt made two attempts to benefit British trade by the conclusion of commercial treaties. The first was in 1785, with Ireland, whose Parliament had been at liberty to regulate Irish trade since 1779 and had been entirely independent of that of Great Britain since 1782. His proposals, with some modifications, were accepted by the Dublin Parliament, but the changes insisted upon by the Irish made them unacceptable to

English manufacturers, who feared that their products would be undersold by those of the Irish. Pitt was forced by the volume of British opposition to modify his proposals and to include with them a provision that in future the commercial relations of the two countries should be under the sole control of the British Parliament. This suggested surrender of their recently won liberty was obviously unacceptable to the Irish, and the scheme was dropped.

In 1786 a commercial treaty was concluded with France. British cotton goods, cutlery, and iron goods were to be admitted into France at reduced rates of duty, and a similar concession was made in Great Britain on French wines, brandy, and olive oil. The treaty was opposed by the Whigs in the House of Commons on the ground that France was "the natural enemy of Great Britain." But it was worthy of commendation alike on political and economic grounds. During the six or seven years of its duration there was so large an increase in the volume of trade between France and Great Britain that if peace had been maintained an extension of the treaty would certainly have been made. Moreover, agreement on commercial matters would, under more favourable circumstances, have promoted cordial political relations between the two countries.

Pitt had no liking for and no faith in the system of political corruption which characterised the eighteenth century, the system by which at first the Whigs and afterwards the King secured power. He declined to maintain his majority by offering pensions or sinecures to his supporters, though he appeased them by the award of titles—peerages and lesser honours. During his ministry he was responsible for the creation or advancement of one hundred and forty peerages, so that the House of Lords was substantially enlarged and became more pronouncedly Tory in character.

In 1785 he proposed that thirty-six rotten boroughs should be disfranchised, and that the seventy-two seats thus released should be assigned to the counties and to large towns hitherto unrepresented. He included in his scheme a substantial extension of the franchise. To the "patrons" of these rotten boroughs he proposed to award compensation out of public funds, setting aside the sum of one million pounds for this purpose. The King disliked the idea of parliamentary reform, but did not venture to use his influence in the House of Commons against it. Pitt himself disliked the idea of purchasing their

"rights" from the patrons, and put it forward only because without such a provision there was no possibility of the proposal being carried. The plan was vigorously criticised, and the House of Commons rejected it. Pitt made no further attempt at parliamentary reform.

In 1787 a number of philanthropists, including Wilberforce, Clarkson, Sharp, and Zachary Macaulay, formed a society for the abolition of the slave trade. Large commercial interests were at stake, as the prosperity of Bristol and Liverpool was supposed to have been founded upon this trade. Acute controversy developed between, on the one hand, the merchants and planters who profited by it and, on the other hand, the humanitarians who sought to expose its horrors. In the discussions which took place in the House of Commons Pitt associated himself with his political opponents, Fox and Burke, in support of Wilberforce, and in so doing offended some of his followers. For the time being, however, no action was taken, and it was not until after Pitt's death that the slave trade was abolished.

Pitt was not unmindful of the interests of the British Empire. In 1784 he carried through Parliament an India Act under which that country was ruled for three-quarters of a century. A Board of Control, which was a department of the British Government, was established in London, and the freedom of action of the East India Company was restricted to commercial matters. In all matters of government the Company was subordinated to the Board of Control. In 1788 the first Australian settlement was begun, and in 1791 a Canada Act (or Constitutional Act) was passed by which the separate existence of Upper and Lower Canada was recognised; each province was given a Legislative Assembly, and a system of government was established which remained unchanged for half a century.

Warren Hastings, who had been Governor-General of Bengal from 1773 to 1785, returned to England in the latter year. His conduct in difficult circumstances had been misrepresented in England, and the Whig leaders, Fox, Burke, and Sheridan, proposed his impeachment. Though the King supported Hastings, Pitt felt that there were some features of the Governor-General's administration which required defence, and he supported the motion for impeachment, which was carried. The trial of Hastings before the House of Lords was begun in

looked to France for help, but Pitt declared that Great Britain would support the Stadtholder, and war seemed to be imminent. France took no action, and war was averted. The immediate result of the affair was the formation, in 1788, of a Triple Alliance of Great Britain, Prussia, and the United Provinces for mutual defence and, in particular, for the maintenance of the authority of the Stadtholder. Not only was British isolation in Europe at an end, but Great Britain had recovered a commanding position in European diplomacy.

The greatness of Pitt lay in his character and ideals rather than in his achievements. His financial policy while the country was at peace was sound; in time of war it was, as will be shown, open to serious criticism. As a reformer he made certain proposals and was sympathetic towards others; yet few of these reforms materialised in his time. He was no champion of political and social reform, prepared to sacrifice everything in a crusade to achieve his aims; he appeared to do little more than propound suggestions which might or might not win acceptance by the nation. Yet he was undeniably a great man. He was a man with a high conception of honour and public duty, and, like his father, with an utter contempt for the corruption of eighteenth-century political life. If, however, he was an idealist he was also a practical man. He pointed to the ideal, and he knew how far it was possible to go towards it. He regarded free trade as desirable, but he realised that in his time only slight steps could be taken towards it. He was desirous of parliamentary reform, but he was convinced that it could not be even begun without coming to terms with the vested interests of the existing system. He recognised that the abolition of slavery could be achieved only by stages, of which the abolition of the slave trade must be the first. In his advocacy of these things Pitt was in advance of the nation, and what he envisaged was realised long after his death. In that lies the evidence of his greatness.

CHAPTER II

THE FRENCH REVOLUTIONARY WAR

THE remarkable series of events known as the French Revolution calls for notice on account of its effects, which were felt not only in France but in every part of Europe. The underlying cause of the movement was the discontent of the people of France at the maintenance of the privileges of nobles and clergy and at the intolerable burden of taxation. The financial collapse of France was the immediate cause of the summoning of the States-General to meet in 1789. That body, soon to be known as the National Assembly, and, later, as the Constituent Assembly, drew up for France a constitution in which the privileges of the upper classes were abolished and the powers of the monarchy severely curtailed. The period of its meeting, 1789-91, was a time of much disorder. In Paris the mob attacked and destroyed a great state fortress, the Bastille; in the country the peasants attacked and destroyed many of the châteaux of the nobles; acts of violence were frequently committed; and large numbers of aristocrats followed the prudent course of leaving the country, some taking refuge in the Holy Roman Empire, while many crossed the Channel into England.

In the early days of the French Revolution the outbreak of a general European war seemed unlikely. France, occupied in reorganising her government, was in no condition to make war upon her neighbours, and no cause of conflict could be perceived. In course of time, however, differences arose between France and other continental powers. The Emperor and the King of Prussia sympathised with the plight of the French royal family and made some preparations for intervening on their behalf; moreover, they feared that revolutionary principles might spread to their dominions. France declared war on Austria in April, 1792, and the King of Prussia treated the declaration as applying also to him. The conflict was inevitable. France claimed the right of settling her internal affairs without foreign interference; her enemies held that they were entitled to prevent the spread of the Revolution to their own

France had achieved a remarkable degree of success. The conquest of the Austrian Netherlands was followed by that of Holland, which was formed into the Batavian republic, in alliance with France. Prussia and Spain were glad to make peace, and the latter entered the war on the side of France. By 1796 the only important powers remaining at war with France were Austria and Great Britain, and in that year Napoleon Bonaparte, in a brilliant campaign, drove the Austrians out of northern Italy. They were forced, in 1797, to accept the humiliating peace of Campo Formio, by which Lombardy was left in French hands. The Venetian republic was extinguished, and its territories ceded to Austria.

Meanwhile, Pitt had organised occasional raids on the coast of France by French noble exiles, but little damage was done to the enemy in this way. In 1793 Admiral Hood, in command of the Mediterranean fleet, occupied Toulon, a city which contained a considerable royalist element. Many English people hoped that this success would contribute to the early conclusion of the war, but later in the year a strong republican force vigorously attacked Toulon. Its retention by the British would have involved an effort out of all proportion to its importance, and it was abandoned after several French ships had been captured or destroyed.

A naval battle off Ushant, fought on the first of June, 1794, and known as the Glorious First of June, resulted in a severe defeat for a French fleet which was convoying corn-ships from America to France, but, as the merchant ships escaped into port while the battle was proceeding, the French could claim that honours were even. Further naval achievements in the next few years included the capture of certain French West Indian islands, and of some Dutch possessions, including Guiana, Ceylon, and the Cape of Good Hope.

By 1797 Great Britain alone remained at war with France, which was no longer without allies. Holland and Spain had both declared war on Great Britain, whose position was extremely serious, since her freedom from invasion depended on the superiority of her fleet, and each of her enemies was a naval power of importance. The attempted invasion of Ireland in 1796, referred to in another chapter, had failed only through bad weather conditions. It now became the object of British naval strategy to prevent a concentration of enemy fleets, and, in spite of mutinies in the navy, this was achieved.

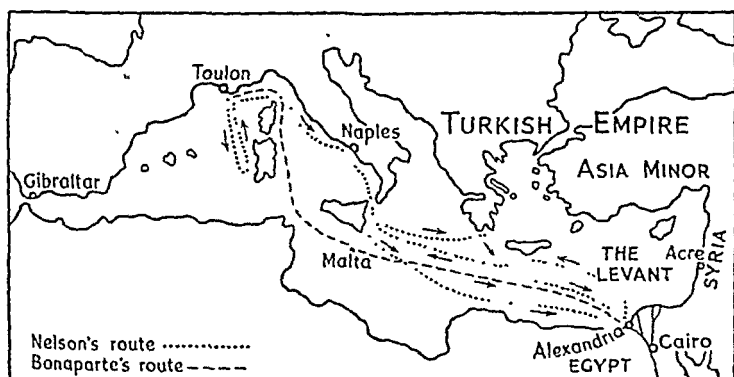
It was at this critical time that disaffection in the navy came to a head, and both at Spithead and at the mouth of the Thames the sailors mutinied. Many of them had been pressed into the service, in which conditions of extreme hardship and brutality prevailed. Life in the cramped quarters of an eighteenth-century ship could not have been other than uncomfortable, and food was necessarily of poor quality, but, in addition, pay was small and usually in arrears, and discipline was maintained by methods of ferocious severity. The discontent of the men was expressed in mutiny at the moment when their services were of vital importance to the nation. Fortunately, neither outbreak was of long duration. At Spithead the men remained, on the whole, respectful to their officers, and they returned to duty after Lord Howe had promised that their grievances should be remedied. At the Nore the mutiny was more serious. The leaders of the movement were inspired with revolutionary ideas, but many of the men remained loyal at heart, and after about a month the mutiny collapsed.

Early in the year 1797 Admiral Jervis, with a fleet of fifteen ships of the line, met and defeated a Spanish fleet of twenty-seven ships off Cape St. Vincent. Four Spanish ships were captured and several others were seriously damaged. Jervis, who assigned much of the credit for the victory to Nelson, his second-in-command, was created a peer with the title of Earl St. Vincent. Some months later the Dutch were defeated at the Battle of Camperdown by Sir Adam Duncan. The fleets were of approximately equal strength; nine Dutch ships were captured. By the end of the year Great Britain was as assuredly supreme at sea as France was on land.

Bonaparte had obtained a great reputation in France on account of his successes in Italy, and in 1798 he planned a fresh campaign. With a fleet and an army he sailed from Toulon, and, after capturing Malta from the Knights of St. John, he reached Egypt, then a province of the Turkish Empire. No certain knowledge of his ultimate aims exists. It is probable that he intended to conquer Egypt and continue his course to India. He would thus inflict a heavy blow upon British prestige and British trade, which would go far towards compelling Great Britain to come to terms.

Although, since the loss of Minorca in 1782, there had been no British naval base east of Gibraltar, a British fleet under the command of Nelson had been watching Toulon. Some of

Nelson's vessels were damaged by storm; he was compelled to put in to a Sardinian port to refit, and was unable to prevent Bonaparte's departure. Nelson had no certain information of the French plans, but, after receiving reinforcements, he sailed to the east and reached Alexandria before the French. Failing to find them there, he cruised about the Levant for a month in search of the enemy. Upon returning to Alexandria he discovered the French fleet at anchor, and, in the Battle of the Nile, he destroyed it. Bonaparte, who had won some victories in Egypt, was thus cut off from France, and the re-establishment of his communications became an urgent matter. He marched



THE MEDITERRANEAN, 1798-1800

into Syria, but he was checked at Acre, which was strongly held by the Turks, reinforced by an English naval brigade under Sir Sidney Smith, and he withdrew to Egypt. It being impossible for Bonaparte to transport his army back to France, he left it in the East and returned alone in a small vessel. Upon his arrival in France he overthrew the existing Government, the Directory, and made himself First Consul. The French were unable to retain Malta after the destruction of their fleet, and it was captured by the British in 1800.

The renewal of French activity in 1798 had enabled Pitt to organise a Second Coalition consisting, in addition to Great Britain, of Russia, Austria, Turkey, and some smaller powers. During Bonaparte's absence in the East victories were gained over the French in Italy and Switzerland by Russian and Austrian armies. Quarrels among the allies led to Russian

withdrawal from the war, and Bonaparte in 1800 defeated the Austrians at Marengo. In the following year Austria made, at Lunéville, a second humiliating peace. For the second time Great Britain was left practically alone against France.

The determination of Great Britain to maintain a blockade of French ports and to exclude from them neutral ships which carried contraband of war led to friction with several of the states of northern Europe. The Tsar, Paul I, had other grounds of unfriendliness towards Great Britain, and in December, 1800, he organised a league of Russia, Sweden, Prussia, and Denmark, to resist by force British interference with neutral vessels. In 1801 a British squadron under Sir Hyde Parker, with Nelson as second in command, sailed to the Baltic, defeated the Danes, and captured or destroyed their fleet. During the year the Tsar was assassinated, and Great Britain came to terms with his successor. With the withdrawal of Russia the league collapsed.

Both sides were weary of a war in which there seemed to be no prospect of a decisive victory being obtained by either. Great Britain was successful at sea; the French were triumphant everywhere on land, except, indeed, in Egypt, where their army had been defeated by Sir Ralph Abercromby. Pitt was no longer in office, and Addington, his successor, yielded to the popular demand for peace. Negotiations were begun, and by the Treaty of Amiens Great Britain undertook to restore to the French the captured West Indian islands and to the Dutch the Cape of Good Hope, but she retained Trinidad, captured from Spain, and Ceylon, taken from the Dutch. Malta was to be restored by Great Britain to the Knights of St. John, and the French agreed to retire from the Papal States and Naples (which they had occupied during the war). British and French troops were to leave Egypt, which was to be restored to the Turkish Empire.

The Treaty of Amiens was more favourable to France than to Great Britain. The latter gave back many important conquests. The French yielded only Egypt, which they had already lost, and central and southern Italy, which could be recovered at any time. Further, Great Britain had entered the war in 1793 in order to maintain the existing system of states in Europe, and by making a peace which left the French in possession of the Rhine boundary, with subject allies in Italy and Holland, she had failed to secure her main object in the war.

Addington was prepared to defend the peace, which he described as honourable and likely to be lasting. Sheridan expressed the general view more accurately when he described it as "a peace that every man was glad of and no man was proud of."

The war was remarkable for the success of the French. When hostilities began France was distracted and almost bankrupt. Her armies were ragged, ill equipped, and ill disciplined, and they were opposed to the trained levies of the powers of central Europe. By all the recognised rules of warfare the struggle ought to have been short, and, for France, inglorious. But the enthusiasm of the French troops, fighting for the ideals of the Revolution, enabled them to carry everything before them and to compel the monarchs of Europe to accept humiliating terms of peace. Great Britain, which was allied with the despotic monarchies of the continent, escaped from similar humiliation only by reason of her insular position and the strength of her fleet.

CHAPTER III

PITT—IN THE YEARS OF WAR

THE course of the French Revolution was followed with marked interest in Great Britain, and in its earlier stages much sympathy was felt with the French. They were regarded as a down-trodden people who were struggling for liberty, and it was hoped and, indeed, expected that the deliberations of the National Assembly would result in the establishment of a constitution similar to that of Great Britain. Pitt hoped for this issue from the turmoil, and for some time he saw no reason why events in France should disturb the relations existing between the two countries. Certainly there was no expectation of the outbreak of a general European war; on the contrary, it was felt that until order had been re-established in France that country would cease to exercise any appreciable influence in European affairs.

As the revolutionary movement grew more violent British opinion became less favourable. The more extreme Whigs, under the leadership of Fox, who had already expressed unbounded gratification at what had happened, continued to approve of the Revolution, but the nation as a whole turned with indignation from it, and especially from the bloodshed of the Terror. Edmund Burke, hitherto the political ally of Fox, separated from his friend and condemned the Revolution in his two books, *Reflections on the French Revolution*, and *An Appeal from the New to the Old Whigs*. The great philosopher contended that liberty could not be secured by violence, but that it was a product of evolution and development. He criticised the French on account of their seizure of the property of Church and nobles, and argued that instability of the rights of property would lead to the decay of trade and industry, of learning and the arts. There is much in Burke's criticism of the Revolution that is itself open to question, but he proved to be remarkably accurate in his prophecy that order would be restored in France only by the establishment of a military despotism.

The *Reflections* had a great effect in influencing public opinion

in Great Britain. It was not permitted to pass without challenge. Tom Paine, in his *Rights of Man*, and James Mackintosh, in a more polished work, *Vindiciae Gallicae*, attempted to move British opinion in favour of the Revolution; neither succeeded in nullifying the effect of Burke's work.

Condemnation of the Revolution was accompanied by fear of the spread of revolutionary principles to Great Britain. Pitt, who in the first ten years of his ministry had been liberal-minded and in favour of reform, took strong measures to counteract revolutionary tendencies. By the Alien Act, 1793, the Government was empowered to register and, if necessary, to deport immigrant aliens. Prosecutions of men suspected of revolutionary activity were undertaken, and the courts, especially in Scotland, reflected in the severity of their sentences the alarm of Government and people. By the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act in 1794 the Government was enabled to hold suspected persons in prison for an indefinite period without trial.

When the King drove to Westminster to open Parliament in October, 1794, his carriage was attacked by rioters, and this incident was followed by the passing of a Treasonable Practices Act, which extended the crime of treason to the utterance or writing of seditious words, and a Seditious Meetings Act, which prohibited political meetings except under strict regulation. The latter act was to be effective for a period of three years; in fact, neither act was enforced.

Some of these measures appear to have been harsh and unnecessary, but in defence of Pitt and his colleagues it should be remembered that it was impossible to determine with accuracy the extent to which revolutionary propaganda had been carried on. National safety was the first consideration of the Government, which would have deserved condemnation if the precautions it had taken against a danger of uncertain extent had proved inadequate. That the degree to which sedition was rife was not great now seems clear; it was less clear to Pitt.

During the early years of the war the ministry received no assistance in its measures from Fox and his followers, who, posing as the champions of constitutional liberty, seized every opportunity to thwart and embarrass ministers in the conduct of public business. Their action was not inspired by any motive of patriotism, but was indicative merely of a spirit of faction, and its ultimate effect recoiled upon themselves, for

public confidence continued to repose in Pitt. As time went on and the grim nature of the war was more fully realised, revolutionary activity died away, and the nation became united in its determination to defend its liberty against French aggression.

By the Combination Laws of 1799 and 1800 workmen were forbidden to form trade unions. The aim of such organisations was the improvement of conditions of labour, but it was felt that they might become centres of revolutionary activity, and they were suppressed.

Pitt's conduct of the war was criticised in his own time, and it has not escaped unfavourable comment since. His reputation has suffered by the inevitable comparison with his father. He did not possess Chatham's genius for organisation and for selecting competent commanders. He followed his father in basing his action on British naval and financial strength, but, though the coasts were kept free from invasion and French colonies were captured, he did not maintain that close blockade of French ports which had existed during the Seven Years War. Nor were French merchant ships and privateers cleared from the seas, for more than three thousand British merchant vessels were captured by French privateers during the war. Pitt distributed subsidies to his allies, but the money was not always well spent; continental powers did not hesitate to use British money in waging other wars than that against France. Military expeditions, reinforced by French royalists, were fitted out and dispatched to the continent on two or three occasions, but none of them achieved any material success. They were inadequately equipped, badly planned, and unskilfully led, and they involved a waste of life and money out of all proportion to the results achieved.

In no way has Pitt been criticised more severely than in his methods of raising money for the war. Money was needed on a scale hitherto undreamt of. Yet in the early years of the war there was little increase in taxation, and the sinking fund was allowed to continue. At that time Pitt did not realise that the war was likely to be prolonged, and he was unwilling to diminish the growing prosperity of the country by imposing crushing taxation. And although the sinking fund was, strictly speaking, financially defensible only in time of peace, when national income exceeded expenditure and no loans were being raised, Pitt thought it unnecessary to interrupt it for what he expected

to be a short war. He increased the assessed taxes in 1797, and in the following year an income-tax was levied, on a carefully graduated scale. The tax was payable on incomes of sixty pounds per annum and over, and though on the lowest incomes the impost was no more than twopence in the pound it was as high as two shillings in the pound on incomes of over two hundred pounds per annum. It was regarded definitely as a war tax, which, it was understood, would be removed upon the return of peace. It has often been asserted that Pitt was at fault in not imposing this tax earlier. Had he done so he need not have borrowed so freely. But his critics forget that in the early stages of the war the nation shared his view that it would be short, and probably would not have consented to the imposition of heavy taxation.

The feature of Pitt's financial policy which was most open to criticism was his method of borrowing money. As loan after loan was raised the Government naturally had to pay a higher rate of interest on the money received. Yet Pitt issued loans at three per cent again and again, and was forced to allow a heavy discount. The matter is too complex to be discussed fully here, but it may be stated that, if he had issued loans at par, bearing interest at five or six per cent, the dead weight of the debt would have been much less at the end of the war, and the annual interest-charge might have been reduced in the ensuing years of peace by means of conversion loans.

Pitt's critics charge him with doing many things in the worst possible way. Naval strength, they say, was not used to good effect, financial strength was frittered away, and the man who had formerly been liberal-minded and in favour of reform became reactionary and even tyrannical. Against all this it should be remembered that Pitt had to direct the national effort in a struggle of unparalleled magnitude, and that never before, not even in the time of Chatham, had Great Britain been involved in a war in which her very existence was so definitely challenged. Pitt made mistakes; it is easy to assert that many things might have been done in a better way. But no other man of his time would have done better; he held on in spite of disaster; he would never admit the possibility of defeat; his attitude encouraged the nation to hold on; he was "the pilot that weathered the storm."

CHAPTER IV

INDEPENDENT IRELAND

FOR nearly a century after the Revolution of 1688-9 Ireland was in a position of subjection to Great Britain. About three-quarters of the Irish people were Roman Catholic, and they were subject to the provisions of a harsh code of laws which was intended to maintain a permanent English and Protestant ascendancy. Further, the Irish, Catholic and Protestant alike, had other grievances than those arising from the Penal Code. Irish industry and commerce were controlled and limited in such a way as to ensure that they should not injure the economic development of Great Britain. Ireland was to a considerable extent a pastoral country; yet the Irish had no adequate market for their produce, which might not be sent to England lest English farmers should suffer from Irish competition. Irish wool might be exported to Great Britain but not to the colonies or to Europe, where it was in great demand and might have realised a higher price; this restriction was imposed lest a woollen industry should develop on the continent or in North America which might compete with that of Great Britain.

In consequence of the plantations of Tudor and Stuart times much Irish land was owned by Englishmen. Many Irish peasants were tenants of absentee landlords and were called upon to pay an excessive rent for the privilege of cultivating a few acres of land. They lived in a state of extreme poverty. In England the yeoman who could not make a living on the land could move into a town and find work in a factory. The Irishman had no other occupation to which to turn, since machinery and factories had not then been introduced into Ireland.

The Government of Ireland was subject in every essential respect to that of Great Britain. The Irish Parliament met only in alternate years, and had little power. It was unable to pass any act which had not already received the assent of the King in council, and this meant that the approval of the English ministry was needed for any legislation to be proposed in

Dublin. Further, by an act of the British Parliament passed in the reign of George I the Parliament at Westminster was empowered to legislate for Ireland. The making of Irish law, therefore, was completely under the control of the British Government.

The Irish Parliament was corrupt. Two-thirds of its members represented rotten or pocket boroughs. It was, consequently, under the domination of the great landlords of Ireland, many of whom were resident in England. It was subject to no Septennial Act, and many years might elapse between general elections. (The Parliament elected in 1727 lasted throughout George II's reign, a period of thirty-three years.) Early in the reign of George III an Octennial Act was passed, by which the duration of the Irish Parliament was limited to eight years.

Irish government was in the hands of English officials. At its head was the Lord Lieutenant, invariably a great noble who spent most of his time in Great Britain and visited Ireland for a few weeks every alternate year, when the Irish Parliament was sitting. In his absence the Government was carried on by Lords Justices. The Government offices were in Dublin Castle, which was viewed with hatred by the Irish as the headquarters of alien rule. Corruption was prevalent, and posts in Church and state were filled by the appointment of friends of the ruling class.

The history of Ireland in the first half of the eighteenth century is a record of spasmodic and ineffective attempts to oppose the Government in the Irish Parliament, and of occasional outbreaks of disorder in the country. But the Anglo-American struggle in the reign of George III afforded the Irish both an example and an opportunity. Irish volunteers took up arms, and, although the purpose of this movement was to defend the country from French attack rather than to defy the British Government, it was evidently impossible henceforth for the latter to disregard the grievances of an armed nation. In 1778 the British Parliament repealed some of the worst features of the Penal Code and removed some of the restrictions on Irish trade; in the following year the whole system was abandoned.

The growing strength of the Irish volunteers encouraged the Irish to make further demands. In February, 1782, a meeting at Dungannon of delegates from the volunteers demanded the

independence of the Irish Parliament, and in April the Irish Parliament, on the proposal of Henry Grattan, presented an address to the Crown asserting its independence. The difficulties of the British Government at this time were such as to compel it to agree, and the Parliament at Westminster concurred in the Irish demand.

The legal position after 1782 was that Ireland was in a state of equality with Great Britain, and was subject only to the Crown, as Scotland had been before 1707. This, however, was far from being the actual position, since the Dublin Castle system of government remained, and the chief officials of the Irish Government were still appointed from London. There was no "responsible" government; the executive was not dependent upon the Irish Parliament, which could not by an adverse vote secure the removal of ministers in whom it had no confidence. Irish measures were still subject to the royal veto, which would be exercised on the advice of British ministers. Further, the prevalent corruption enabled the magnates to control Irish affairs in much the same way as before the Irish Parliament achieved its independence. Constitutional relations between the two kingdoms were unsatisfactory, and friction was bound to continue.

The question of parliamentary reform soon occupied the attention of the Irish Parliament. The Lords, lay and ecclesiastical, were generally subservient to the Crown, while, of three hundred members in the Commons, hardly one hundred were freely elected, the other two hundred being the nominees of the patrons of rotten and pocket boroughs. The question was complicated by the demands of the Catholic population for the franchise; a reform of the Irish Parliament on a Protestant basis would still leave three-fourths of the Irish people without representation. The Earl of Bristol, who was Bishop of Derry, strongly advocated the extension of the franchise to Roman Catholics, and he tried to rouse the volunteers on the question. Grattan supported this course, but a resolution for reform which would have left Catholic aspirations unsatisfied was proposed by Henry Flood. The whole movement was opposed by the Lord Lieutenant, the Duke of Rutland, and Flood's motion was defeated. For the time the agitation died down.

Pitt at this time held that it was more important to promote Irish prosperity than to attempt to remedy Irish political

grievances. This was one of his reasons for bringing forward in 1785 a proposal for a trade treaty between the two countries. He hoped to establish free trade between Great Britain and Ireland, a measure which would greatly benefit Ireland. The proposal was carried in the Irish Parliament, but when it was brought before the House of Commons at Westminster it was strongly opposed by British manufacturers, who feared that they would be ruined by Irish competition. Pitt now modified his proposal in such a way that in commercial matters the Irish Parliament would be bound by that of Great Britain. It was now unacceptable to the Irish and was dropped.

The relations between Catholics and Protestants remained the dominant political question in Ireland. The Protestants were determined to maintain the exclusion of the Roman Catholics from political power, fearing that the latter, if they were permitted to enter Parliament, would soon be in a majority and would pass a code of laws against their opponents. The privileges, the property, and even the lives of Protestants might be endangered. It was felt that, though it might be unjust to keep Roman Catholics in permanent subjection, it was unsafe to emancipate them. Meanwhile, the condition of the Irish peasantry remained unchanged; they were still rack-rented for the benefit of English absentee landlords.

In 1791 a Society of United Irishmen was formed. Its leader, Wolfe Tone, himself a Protestant, hoped to unite in it his countrymen of every creed and class in order to secure parliamentary reform and Catholic Emancipation. The United Irishmen were inspired by the example of the French, and the movement spread to every part of the land. But the hatred of Catholics and Protestants for each other was too deeply rooted for the two groups to work together for any object, however desirable, and in course of time the United Irishmen became a more distinctively Catholic organisation which aimed at the overthrow of Protestant domination and the total separation of Ireland from Great Britain.

Although the Lord Lieutenant, the Earl of Westmorland, was opposed to the granting of concessions to Roman Catholics, the agitation for relief continued, and the British Government advised that they should be enfranchised. In 1793 Roman Catholics were given the franchise, a measure which was to the advantage of the peasantry rather than the gentry, who were still debarred from Parliament and from public office.

The appointment of Lord Fitzwilliam, who was known to be sympathetic to Catholic claims, as Lord Lieutenant raised the hopes of the relief party. Pitt, who was personally in favour of Catholic Emancipation, thought the time to be inopportune, and in making the appointment he expressed the hope that the question would not be pressed. If, however, it should come to the front the Lord Lieutenant was instructed to support it. Fitzwilliam was in Ireland for less than three months in 1795. A bill for Roman Catholic relief was prepared for submission to the Irish Parliament. Hostile influence was brought to bear in England, and Fitzwilliam was recalled. The opportunity of conciliating Ireland was lost.

A period of bitter animosity followed. Disorder increased, and outrages were committed by the partisans of both sides. In September, 1795, an engagement which might almost be called a battle occurred in Armagh between Defenders (Catholic) and Peep-o'-Day Boys (Protestant). The United Irishmen engaged in secret and treasonable negotiations with the French Government. As a result, a French naval expedition was fitted out in 1796 under the command of Hoche for the invasion of Ireland. Although the French fleet reached Bantry Bay it was driven offshore by a gale, and no landing was made. There was no corresponding rising of the Irish people.

But discontent remained, and the fear of rebellion prompted the Government in 1797 to proclaim martial law in Ulster. A period of cruel repression followed; if outrages were committed by the desperate peasantry, the organised and systematic atrocities—hangings, floggings, imprisonment, impressment, devastation—which were laid to the charge of the troops, regular and irregular, were far more thorough and complete. An attempt by Sir Ralph Abercromby to restore discipline in the forces led to his removal from his post, and in March, 1798, General Lake became commander-in-chief.

The conspiracy of 1798 was serious and widespread. A French invasion of Ireland was to take place in conjunction with an Irish rising. The Government, however, was alert; informers were numerous, and many of the leaders of the movement were arrested before the outbreak began. The story of the revolt is soon told. It was crushed in Ulster without serious trouble, and the chief acts of violence occurred in Leinster. No French help was received, and the rebels, though numerous, lacked discipline and organisation. The ferocity

of Government troops and Irish loyalists cowed many rebels and drove others to desperation, and little or no quarter was given on either side. Several battles were fought, but the issue was never in serious doubt, and when Lake defeated the main rebel army at Vinegar Hill and reoccupied Wexford the rising came to an end. A French expedition under Humbert landed too late in Connaught, and though it gained a temporary success at Castlebar it was defeated by Lake and Lord Cornwallis and was compelled to surrender. A further French attempt was frustrated at sea; some ships were captured, and among the prisoners was Wolfe Tone. He was tried by court martial in Dublin and was sentenced to death; before the sentence could be carried out he committed suicide in prison.

Pitt was convinced that the Irish question would never be settled without the grant of full political rights to the Roman Catholics, and that such a concession, under existing conditions, would be full of peril for the Protestant minority. He proposed to solve the problem by uniting the Parliaments of Great Britain and Ireland and granting Catholic Emancipation immediately afterwards. In this way political justice might be done to the Roman Catholic Irish without endangering the lives of their Protestant fellow-countrymen, for, although Irish Catholic members would be in a majority in a separate Irish Parliament in Dublin, they would be a mere handful in the Parliament of the United Kingdom at Westminster. The scheme for the union required the assent of both Parliaments, and it was carried through the Irish Parliament by the employment of bribery on the most extensive scale. Pitt, while he despised such measures, was convinced that only in this way could his object be attained. The Act of Union was carried through both Parliaments in 1800.

By the terms of the union Great Britain and Ireland were to become one country, with one King, one Parliament, one army, and one flag. Twenty-eight Irish peers, elected for life by their fellow-peers, were to sit in the House of Lords, which was also to contain one archbishop and three bishops of the Irish Church, sitting in annual rotation. In the House of Commons Ireland was to be represented by one hundred members. Free trade was to be established between the two islands, and Ireland was to participate in all the commercial advantages which accrued to Great Britain from the working of the Navigation Acts. Ireland was to contribute two-seventeenths, and Great

Britain fifteen-seventeenths, of the total revenue of the United Kingdom, and if at any time the debts of the two countries should stand in the ratio of two to fifteen they were to be amalgamated. Irish peers who had no seats in the House of Lords were to be permitted to seek election to the House of Commons for constituencies in Great Britain.

In Pitt's opinion the success of the union would be impaired unless Roman Catholics were relieved of all political disabilities, but on this matter he was opposed by some members of his cabinet and by the King, who declared that he could not consent to Catholic Emancipation without violating his coronation oath. No argument that Pitt advanced could induce the King to change his views, and Pitt resigned office.

The union began under the worst possible conditions. Not merely did Roman Catholic disabilities remain, but the Dublin Castle system of government continued, and nothing was done to improve the hard lot of the Irish peasant. From the outset the Irish were dissatisfied with the union; they were convinced that the British had acted in bad faith in bringing it about, and before many years had passed they began an agitation for its repeal.

CHAPTER V

THE NAPOLEONIC WAR

WAR between Great Britain and France was renewed in May, 1803, after an interval of only thirteen months. The Peace of Amiens appears to have been regarded in both countries as no more than a temporary stoppage of the war. Ill-feeling remained, and each side soon began to complain of the conduct of the other. Great Britain declined to evacuate Malta; it was believed that Bonaparte (now First Consul of France) was contemplating the revival of his Eastern schemes and that he would not hesitate to seize the island again after the British had restored it to the Knights of St. John.

On the other hand, alarm was felt in Great Britain at the continued growth of Napoleon's influence in various parts of the continent. Northern Italy and western Germany were reorganised in accordance with his ideas; Switzerland, now known as the Helvetic Republic, was a subject-ally of France; the Batavian Republic was occupied by French troops, and it was feared that the First Consul contemplated the closing of Dutch ports to English trade. Bonaparte refused to renew the commercial treaty which had existed between Great Britain and France before 1793, and he imposed on British goods a tariff which made the restoration of trade practically impossible. References to him in the British press were hostile and insulting, and he resented the cartoons which held him up to ridicule. Great Britain, in declaring war, was merely anticipating the action which Bonaparte was preparing to take.

In 1802 Bonaparte was appointed First Consul for life (his previous appointment, in 1799, had been for ten years), and two years later he assumed the title of "Emperor of the French." It is the common practice for ruling sovereigns to choose to be known by their Christian names, while other prominent men are referred to by their surnames. Bonaparte assumed the style of "Napoleon" when he received the life appointment to the consulate, and he continued it till his death. The war which is the subject of this chapter is, therefore, appropriately

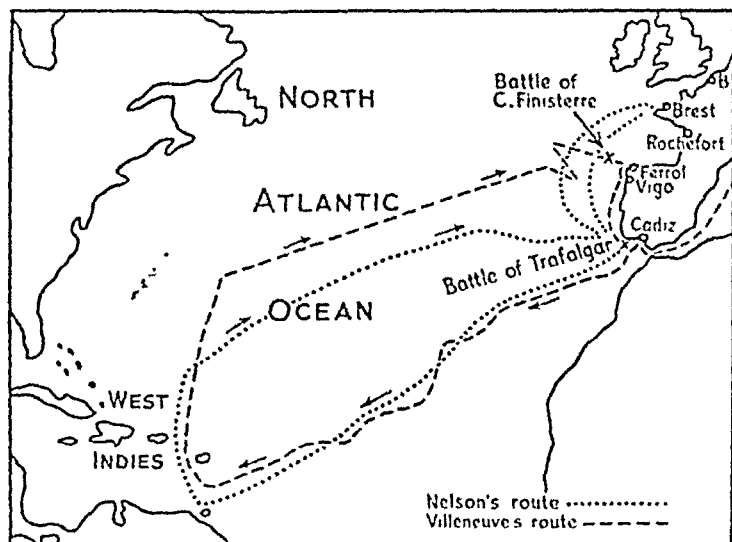
called the Napoleonic War, although, in this country, the French Emperor was commonly called "Bonaparte" throughout the period of the struggle.

The term "Napoleonic War" is of some importance in that it indicates that the struggle was of a different type from that which preceded it. In the French Revolutionary War Great Britain was allied with the eighteenth-century despotic monarchies against a nation inspired with revolutionary ideals; in the Napoleonic War the position was to a considerable extent reversed. Burke's prophecy had been fulfilled, and France was now under the rule of a despot. Though the Revolution was over, the *ancien régime* was not restored. The old, inefficient absolutism of the Bourbons was replaced by the new, ruthless, and highly efficient despotism of Napoleon. In the earlier war the French had appeared everywhere as liberators. They had spread revolutionary principles and had established sound and satisfactory government in the territories which they conquered. But the nations of Europe were now called upon to withstand the advance of a tyranny harsher than that of their former rulers, and in course of time Napoleon was opposed by popular enthusiasm and determination in many parts of Europe. In the first war France was the champion of freedom against despotism; in the second war she fought under a tyrant against the freedom and independence of other nations.

At the outbreak of war Great Britain had no allies; France was able to obtain assistance from Spain, Portugal, the Dutch, and the Swiss, and in 1804 Spain formally entered the war on the French side. In that year Napoleon assembled an army at Boulogne for the invasion of England. A fleet of transports was collected, and troops were practised in embarkation and landing. Alarm was felt in England, and energetic measures were taken to repel the French. An army of volunteers was enrolled, the militia was strengthened, Martello towers were built, and a system of semaphore signalling was installed. Arrangements were made to transfer, if necessary, the court and the treasury from London to a city in the Midlands; artillery and other stores were to be removed from Woolwich to the interior of the country; districts threatened with invasion were to be stripped of everything which could be of use to an enemy.

The obstacle to an invasion lay in the superiority of the British fleet and the certainty that the French transports would

be captured or sunk in mid-Channel. Napoleon hoped to slip across the Channel in a fog, but for many months the sea was clear of all but the slightest of mists. At length, weary of waiting, he evolved a plan for assembling in the Channel a fleet powerful enough to overcome that of Great Britain. He directed the Toulon fleet, under Villeneuve, to evade Nelson's blockade, to make a junction with the Spanish fleet at Cadiz, and to sail for the New World. A squadron from Rochefort had already



THE NORTH ATLANTIC, 1805

escaped from blockade and was attacking British commerce in the West Indies. Villeneuve was expected to unite with the Rochefort fleet, to return speedily to European waters, and, in conjunction with the Brest fleet, to sail up the Channel and convey the transports from Boulogne to the coast of England. It was hoped that Nelson would pursue Villeneuve to the West Indies and would cruise among the islands looking for the French until it was too late for him to prevent the invasion. Napoleon aimed at dispersing the British fleet and concentrating his own squadrons at the same time. The success of the plan depended on the movements of the French and Spanish

fleets being as precise and swift as those of armies and upon the supposed stupidity of British admirals; as a matter of fact, British fleets and commanders were as much superior to those of the French as Napoleon was superior to the generals to whom he had hitherto been opposed on the continent.

The French plan failed. Villeneuve escaped from Toulon, joined the Spanish fleet, and sailed to the West Indies, whither Nelson followed him in order to frustrate possible attacks on the British West Indian colonies. Villeneuve did not meet the Rochefort squadron, and he failed to shake off Nelson, who divined his intention of returning to Europe. The British admiral sent a fast brig home to inform the Government of the state of affairs, and he followed with his fleet. Villeneuve, on reaching European waters, was attacked by Sir Robert Calder off Cape Finisterre, and after the battle he retreated towards Ferrol. Moving southward, he put in at Vigo, and when at length he ventured out he retired to Cadiz.

Meanwhile, Nelson was back in the Channel. Napoleon was angry at the collapse of his scheme and censured Villeneuve for not pressing on to the Channel after the Battle of Cape Finisterre. The French admiral now left Cadiz, determined to show his eagerness to meet the British fleet. At the Battle of Trafalgar the French and Spanish fleets were destroyed as a fighting force, though in Great Britain the victory was felt to have been dearly bought at the cost of the life of Nelson. The proposed invasion of England had to be abandoned, and the camp at Boulogne was broken up.

Many people have doubted whether Napoleon ever meant to invade England. The risks were enormous, and the success of the naval plan depended to a great extent upon luck and upon the supposed incompetence of British admirals. The alternative view is that Napoleon intended the proposed invasion to be a pretext for the formation of a camp where a huge army might be concentrated, an army which would be ready to strike at any possible enemy on the continent of Europe. Yet it cannot be doubted that victory over Great Britain was desired by Napoleon beyond anything else, and his preparations were on so vast a scale and appeared to be directed so completely to one end that it is difficult to regard them as mere bluff. It should be remembered, moreover, that, if British admirals had been less acute, the scheme of concentrating a large French fleet in the Channel might have succeeded, and it can hardly be

doubted that in that event the invasion would have been attempted.

In 1805 Pitt succeeded in forming the Third Coalition, consisting of Russia, Austria, and Great Britain, against France. Austrian and Russian armies were defeated by Napoleon at Austerlitz, and Austria was compelled to make peace. Prussia, which was not a member of the Coalition, became involved in the war, and was defeated at Jena and Auerstadt. The French Emperor entered Berlin as a conqueror, and, passing on, he overcame the Russians at Friedland in 1807. (Great Britain missed an excellent opportunity of landing a force on the Pomeranian coast and destroying his communications with France.) Peace was arranged at Tilsit in that year; Prussia lost heavily, but the French and the Russian Emperors became allies. Napoleon was at the height of his power, and his authority was challenged by none but Great Britain, which stood alone in opposition to the French for the fourth time in ten years.

Napoleon, realising that British resistance to him was based on naval power and that Great Britain supported her navy out of the profits of her trade, concluded that if British commerce were ruined Great Britain would be compelled to reduce her fleet. He thought that, if the market for British exports were cut off while imports continued, the balance of trade would turn heavily against Great Britain, and that she would find herself in such serious financial difficulties that she would be glad to treat for peace.

By a series of decrees he established what is called the Continental System. The British Isles were declared to be in a state of blockade, and France and her allies were forbidden to trade with this country. All European ports from the Vistula to the Adriatic were to be closed to British ships, and, in order that British goods should not find their way into Europe under neutral flags, neutral ships were forbidden to touch at a British port before visiting the continent; if they violated this rule they were liable to confiscation as prizes of war. British merchandise, wherever found, was to be destroyed.

The British reply was contained in the Orders in Council, by which the ports of France and her allies were declared to be in a state of blockade. Neutral ships were forbidden to go to the continent, and those on the way thither were to be diverted to British ports. In substance, Napoleon ordered that Europe

should not buy British goods; Great Britain declared that if the continent would not buy British goods it should buy no other.

This commercial warfare continued till the fall of Napoleon. The Continental System inflicted much damage upon British trade by the closing of European markets to British goods, and, though in the absence of a French fleet the blockade of Great Britain could not be enforced, a large number of French privateers inflicted heavy losses upon British merchant shipping. But the counter-blockade of the continent by Great Britain caused much greater loss and suffering to the French and to other peoples subject to Napoleon. British products were really needed in Europe, and much smuggling went on. Napoleon himself had to issue licences for the admission of British goods of various kinds. The hardships caused in Europe by the Continental System caused widespread resentment against the French Emperor, which developed into hatred of him and his rule.

By the Treaty of Tilsit the Continental System was extended to Russia, and it was feared that Napoleon was contemplating the seizure of the Danish fleet in order to use it against Great Britain. In order to forestall him, the British Government sent a fleet to Copenhagen to invite the Danes to surrender their navy. They refused. Copenhagen was bombarded, and the Danish ships were captured and brought to England.

The success of the Continental System depended upon its being applied universally; if any port on the continent should be open to receive British merchandise the system was bound to fail. Portugal, which had always been friendly with Great Britain, was reluctant to exclude British trade, and Napoleon determined to enforce the system in that land. French troops under Junot invaded Portugal, and the court fled to Brazil, a Portuguese colony.

Even before Junot reached Lisbon Napoleon took action which he had for some time been contemplating against the King of Spain. He summoned Charles IV and his son Ferdinand to meet him at Bayonne; he compelled them to resign their rights to the Spanish crown; and he appointed his brother Joseph to the vacant throne. In doing this he overreached himself; the Spanish people were indignant at his action, and before long the country was in revolt against Joseph. The Peninsular War had begun.

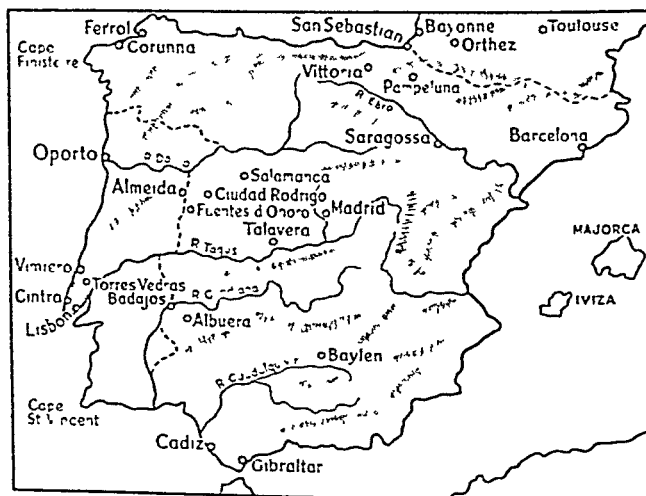
Napoleon underestimated the strength of Spanish feeling, and he sent an army of raw conscripts under Dupont to crush the rising. The capture of eighteen thousand of these men, with their general, at Baylen enheartened the Spaniards, and convinced the British Government that their resistance to the French was a national rising. Great Britain was already morally bound to support Portugal in its resistance to the Continental System; she now realised that an opportunity had arisen for conducting a land campaign against Napoleon with some prospect of success. A British army was sent to Portugal under Sir Arthur Wellesley, who defeated Junot at Vimiero. During the battle a superior officer, Sir Harry Burrard, arrived and took command; in his turn he was superseded by Sir Hew Dalrymple. By the Convention of Cintra Dalrymple permitted Junot to retire from Portugal with the spoils of war instead of compelling him to surrender unconditionally. The generals were ordered back to England to defend their action before a court martial. Burrard and Dalrymple were acquitted, but they were not sent back. Wellesley was held not to have been responsible and was restored to his command.

Joseph Bonaparte reached Madrid in 1808, but the hostility of his subjects and the news of Dupont's defeat compelled him to withdraw north of the Ebro. He was joined by Napoleon, who advanced and recovered Madrid. Sir John Moore, who in the absence of Wellesley was in command of the British forces, advanced into Spain from Portugal. Napoleon turned towards him, and Moore retired towards Corunna. Napoleon relinquished the pursuit to Marshal Soult, whose attack was repulsed by the British at Corunna, where Moore was slain.

The French captured Saragossa after a siege in 1809, and Soult invaded Portugal and captured Oporto. Wellesley, upon his return to the Peninsula, threatened Soult's communications, and the marshal had to retire from Oporto and retreat into Spain, with the loss of fifty-eight guns. Wellesley advanced into Spain and defeated Joseph and Marshal Victor at the Battle of Talavera; Soult, however, was reinforced and Wellesley retired into Portugal.

In 1810 a large French army under Masséna marched towards Lisbon, but was checked by a triple line of fortifications across the peninsula between the Tagus and the sea. These lines of Torres Vedras, covering a front of nearly thirty miles and defended by hundreds of guns, formed the basis of British

strategy in the war. Wellesley, who became Viscount Wellington after the Battle of Talavera, had constructed these lines secretly, and behind them he was able to receive reinforcements and equipment from Great Britain and so to build up a great army which ultimately drove the French out of Spain. The region in front of these lines had been cleared of supplies, and Masséna, after vainly trying to find a weak spot in the fortifications, retired into Spain early in 1811. Wellington ventured



THE PENINSULAR WAR, 1808-14

out and defeated Masséna at Fuentès d'Onoro, while Beresford besieged Badajoz, a border fortress. He defeated Soult at Albuera, but even with Wellington's aid he could not take Badajoz, and the British withdrew into Portugal for the winter.

Early in 1812 the British stormed Badajoz and Ciudad Rodrigo. During the spring the French in the Peninsula were weakened by the withdrawal of troops which were required to take part in the Moscow expedition. Wellington advanced into Spain and defeated Marshal Marmont (Masséna's successor) at Salamanca. This victory was regarded as the turning-point in the Peninsular War. Wellington, who had been made an

earl after the fall of Ciudad Rodrigo and who now became a marquis, entered Madrid, but a fresh concentration of French armies compelled him to retire to Ciudad Rodrigo for the winter.

In 1813 the French rapidly lost ground. Napoleon withdrew more troops for the war in Central Europe. Joseph abandoned Madrid and retreated towards the Ebro. At Vittoria, Joseph and Marshal Jourdan were heavily defeated; they lost a hundred and fifty guns, and their troops retreated in disorder. The veteran Soult replaced Jourdan, but he was compelled to fall back, and after desperate fighting he was driven from the border fortresses of Pampeluna and San Sebastian into France. Wellington now invaded France, and early in 1814 he inflicted further defeats on Soult at Orthez and Toulouse. The Peninsular War was over. The French had been expelled from Portugal and Spain, and the adventure had cost them the lives of two hundred thousand men.

Several reasons may be assigned for the British victory in the Peninsular War. The British armies had the advantage of being commanded by a man who proved to be (with the possible exception of Napoleon) the greatest master of the art of war at that time; the French were led by a number of marshals, men of capacity, indeed, but who were not free from the jealousies which militated against close co-operation. Napoleon himself took no part in the Peninsular War, except for a short time when Wellington was absent in England. For a time the French were superior in numbers, but withdrawals of troops which were wanted in other theatres of war gave the advantage in this respect to the British. British naval supremacy enabled Wellington to rely upon receiving regular and adequate supplies and reinforcements from home; the French, on the other hand, experienced difficulty in this respect. Even the geographical configuration of Spain added to their difficulties. The chief rivers and mountain ranges of Spain run east and west; French communications had to cross mountains and rivers, while Wellington's advances into Spain from Portugal could take advantage of the valleys. The population of Spain was hostile to the French, and their lines of communication had to be heavily guarded; stragglers and small parties were liable to be cut off. The British, on the other hand, were welcomed by the Spanish. The determined opposition of the people of Spain to the French was not the least of the factors which contributed to their expulsion.

The alliance between Napoleon and the Tsar which was arranged at Tilsit weakened as time went on. Great harm was being done to Russian trade by the Continental System, and the Tsar at length issued decrees which permitted the importation of British colonial produce and placed heavy duties on French wines and silks. Such a leak in the Continental System would destroy its value. There were, in addition, other causes of disagreement, and Napoleon resolved on war.

In the spring of 1812 he assembled in eastern Germany, for the invasion of Russia, an army which, with Prussian and Austrian auxiliaries, consisted of fully 600,000 men. This, the greatest of Napoleon's enterprises, ended in disaster. Though the Russians were defeated at the Battle of Borodino, and Moscow was captured, fire broke out in various parts of the city soon after the French arrival. Had Napoleon retreated at once it is possible that his huge army might have been extricated without serious difficulty. But negotiations were begun between French and Russians and were continued for more than a month, and when they broke down and the French began to withdraw the Russian winter had already begun. Lack of food and insufficiency of clothing caused intense suffering and great mortality among the troops, who were subject also to Russian attacks. Disease broke out among men and animals. The rough pasture of the Russian plain proved unsuitable for the horses of the French army, and many suffered and died, while the retreating troops lost large numbers of men from typhus. A mere remnant of 20,000 men recrossed the Niemen into Germany. The Emperor had lost over half a million men in the adventure.

The disasters of 1812 were followed in 1813 by the formation of the Fourth Coalition, of Russia, Prussia, Austria, and Great Britain, and by the War of Liberation. Fighting occurred in Germany, and Napoleon defeated the allies in several battles. But in the great Battle of Leipzig, the Battle of Nations, which raged for several days, Napoleon was defeated and was forced to retreat into France. The victors followed him. Early in 1814 (while Wellington, now a duke, was crossing the frontier from Spain) Austrian, Prussian, and Russian armies entered France from the east. Napoleon fought desperate battles to stem the invasion, but the allies pressed on to Paris. Napoleon was deposed and exiled to Elba, being permitted, however, to retain the title of Emperor. Louis XVIII, brother of Louis

XVI, was established on the throne of his ancestors, and it was with him that peace was made by the First Treaty of Paris, 1814.

The settlement of Europe after the disturbances of twenty years presented a number of problems which it was resolved to discuss at a congress to be held at Vienna. The Congress began to assemble in November, 1814, though little was done until the beginning of the following year. Dissensions appeared of so serious a character that it seemed possible that further fighting might take place among the victors. Napoleon at Elba watched the course of events with interest, hoping and expecting that the differences among his enemies might be turned to his own advantage.

At the end of February, 1815, he left Elba and landed in the south of France with about a thousand men. He marched towards Paris, meeting with little opposition; regiments sent to arrest him fell in behind him, and he reached the capital with a considerable force a day or two after the flight of Louis XVIII.

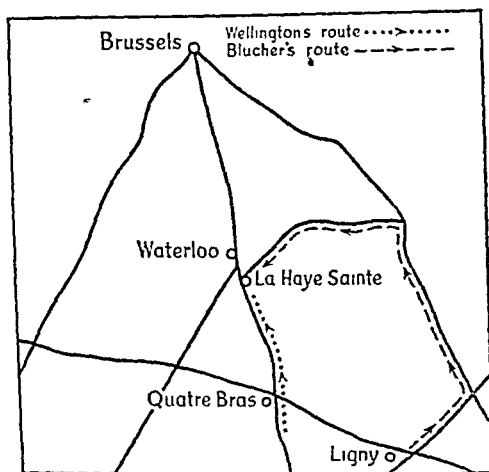
Resuming the title of Emperor of the French, he declared that he wanted nothing but peace and that he intended to rule as a constitutional monarch. But the allies at Vienna refused to treat with him or to give him time to consolidate and strengthen his position for future wars. An alliance of Russia, Prussia, Austria, and Great Britain was formed to fight him, and each power undertook to contribute 150,000 men to the common cause. A double attack upon France was decided upon. Russians and Austrians were to invade France from the east, British and Prussians from the north-east.

Napoleon's position was far stronger than in 1814. The release of prisoners of war placed large armies at his disposal; in 1814 his forces consisted of boys, in 1815 of veterans. He resolved to attack in the north-east, and before the British (under Wellington) and the Prussians (under Blücher) could invade France Napoleon entered Belgium at the head of 120,000 men.

The final campaign was fought in June, 1815. Napoleon's aim was to prevent a junction of British and Prussian forces and to defeat them separately. He attacked Blücher at Ligny, while Marshal Ney engaged the British at Quatre Bras. Blücher was driven back, and Wellington, though he had repulsed the French at Quatre Bras, was compelled by Blücher's retirement to fall back to Waterloo. Blücher's retreat was on a line parallel to the road taken by Wellington, and though Grouchy was

ordered to pursue the Prussians he was unable to prevent the junction which took place on the field of Waterloo.

The Battle of Waterloo was fought on Sunday, 18th June, 1815. Napoleon did not expect the Prussians to come up, and his aim was to capture La Haye Sainte and break through the British left, thus placing himself between the British and Prussian armies and preventing all hope of their junction. The British troops steadily and stubbornly defended contested points



THE WATERLOO CAMPAIGN, 1815

against repeated attacks, and, though ground was yielded at La Haye Sainte, the line as a whole held firm, even against the onslaught of the Imperial Guard. The arrival of the Prussians and the general advance of the British line decided the battle. The French ranks broke, retreat became general, and pursuit was undertaken by the Prussian cavalry. Guns and equipment were abandoned. Napoleon fled to Paris, whither he was followed by the allies. He retired to Rochefort and embarked upon a French frigate, but a day or two later he surrendered to Captain Maitland of the *Bellerophon*. He was brought to England, on which he set eyes for the first and last time in his life, but he was not permitted to land. He was conveyed to

St. Helena, a lonely island in the South Atlantic, where he died in 1821.

The terms of the Second Treaty of Paris were more severe than those of the first treaty. In 1814 the victors had been moderate in their demands; they had posed as liberators of France from the rule of a tyrant rather than as conquerors intent upon punishing her. In view of the readiness of the French people to rally to the support of Napoleon upon his return from Elba it was impossible to maintain this attitude in 1815. France was called upon to withdraw to her boundaries of 1790, to pay a war indemnity of 700,000,000 francs, and to submit to the presence of an army of occupation for five years under the command of the Duke of Wellington. Louis XVIII was again placed on the throne.

The fall of Napoleon was due to many causes. The almost unbroken succession of victories which marked the earlier years of his career was due not merely to inborn genius but to careful planning and accurate foresight. He was less careful in these respects towards the end, and the members of his staff were of opinion that in the Russian campaign and the War of Liberation the qualities which had distinguished him in earlier years were lacking.

Wider causes than this contributed to his failure. France was exhausted by the strain of constant warfare. Conscription was rigorously enforced, and the nation poured forth its manhood until there was no more to give. Enormous losses were experienced in the Peninsula, in the Russian campaign, and in the War of Liberation, and this wastage of life could not be made good.

As the years rolled on and the burden of the Continental System was felt in every part of Europe, Napoleon became more and more disliked. The peoples of Europe regarded him as a despot whose yoke became year by year more burdensome. Spanish and Portuguese in the south-west, Germans in central Europe, Russians in the east, were at one in their determination to free themselves from Napoleon's tyranny. Napoleon had to deal with something more than the enmity of monarchs; he had to face and overcome the opposition of nations, and the task was too much for him.

And throughout the long struggle Napoleon was faced by the might of Great Britain. The British fleet exercised ceaseless vigilance, enclosing the continent in a stranglehold from

CHAPTER VI

THE GOVERNMENT OF GREAT BRITAIN DURING THE NAPOLEONIC WAR

WHEN Pitt resigned office in 1801 the French Revolutionary War was almost at an end, so that the affairs of Great Britain during that conflict were directed by a single master mind. In the period 1801-15 there were several changes of ministry, but, with one exception, all these administrations were Tory, and all were inspired with the determination to carry the Napoleonic War on to a successful issue.

Pitt was succeeded as Prime Minister by Henry Addington, who for some years had been Speaker of the House of Commons. The new ministry suffered by comparison with its predecessor.

As London is to Paddington
So Pitt is to Addington.

Nevertheless, it contained several statesmen of future eminence. The Duke of Portland, who was Prime Minister from 1807 to 1809, and Lord Hawkesbury, who as Earl of Liverpool was Prime Minister from 1812 to 1827, served under Addington; Lord Castlereagh, who held a subordinate office under Addington, was Foreign Secretary from 1812 to 1822; and Lord Eldon, who was appointed Lord Chancellor by Addington, held that office almost without interruption until 1827.

Pitt was far too high-minded to indulge in merely factious opposition, and for some time he and his friends gave their general support to the Government. Its principal achievement was the conclusion of the Treaty of Amiens, and there can be little doubt that, despite criticism of its terms, the treaty was welcomed by the people. The income-tax, which had been imposed as a war tax, was discontinued, and Addington looked forward to a period of peace in which the national debt might be reduced and national prosperity recovered.

This was not to be. The period of peace lasted just over a year, and in May, 1803, war was renewed. The income-tax

was reimposed, and vigorous preparations were made for carrying on the conflict. But there was little confidence, either in Parliament or in the country, in the ability of Addington to direct the national effort against France. Pitt was prepared, in the national interest, to resume office. Under other circumstances he might have felt it to be his duty to insist on the assent of the King to Catholic Emancipation as the condition of his return to office, but he was convinced that the revival of this proposal would cause strong emotion in the King and perhaps being about a recurrence of his insanity. Some informal negotiations took place with a view to including Pitt in Addington's cabinet, but he declined to accept any other office than that of Prime Minister. Addington resigned at the end of April, 1804, and early in May Pitt's second ministry began. He desired to include some Whigs, with his old opponent Fox, in his cabinet, but the King objected, and Pitt refrained from insisting. Early in 1805, Addington, now Lord Sidmouth, accepted office in the new ministry.

The year 1805 was remarkable for the naval campaign which culminated in the Battle of Trafalgar, and for the formation of the Third Coalition. The defeat of Austria and Russia at the Battle of Austerlitz on 2nd December, 1805, is often, and rightly, regarded as Pitt's death-blow. But his proud spirit had suffered severely from the charge of embezzlement of public money which in 1805 was brought against his friend Henry Dundas, Lord Melville. The accusation developed into an impeachment (the last instance of this form of trial in English History). Melville, who had been guilty of carelessness, but not of dishonesty, was acquitted, but not until after Pitt's death, which occurred in January, 1806.

The new ministry was formed by Lord Grenville; it included both Whigs and Tories, and has been styled the "Ministry of All the Talents." The King at last consented to the inclusion of Fox as Foreign Secretary, and the veteran Whig leader, most of whose political career had been passed in opposition and who died in September, 1806, spent the last few months of his life in attempting, without success, to negotiate peace with Napoleon and in at last realising that his former conception of the French Emperor as a well-meaning, pacific ruler, who had been driven to take up arms by the intrigues of unscrupulous opponents, was without foundation. The chief achievement of the Grenville administration was the abolition of the slave trade

in British overseas possessions, a measure which marked the triumph of twenty years of steady propaganda. A proposal to open the higher commissioned ranks in the army and navy to Roman Catholics met with determined opposition from the King, and it was withdrawn. George was not satisfied with this, and he demanded from his ministers an undertaking that they would not, at any future time, advise him to agree to further concessions to Roman Catholics. The ministry declined to give this pledge, and resigned.

For the next five years the real leader of the Government was Spencer Perceval, who was Chancellor of the Exchequer in the Portland Ministry from 1807 to 1809, and who became Prime Minister on Portland's retirement. Affairs at home were of minor importance so long as there was no prospect of an early conclusion of the war. Some small expeditions were undertaken, and in 1808 an army was sent to assist the Portuguese in their opposition to French invasion. The organisation of this, the beginning of the Peninsular War, was the work of Castlereagh, Secretary of State for War, between whom and George Canning, the Foreign Secretary, a state of personal antagonism existed which culminated in a duel between them. This open indication of disagreement amongst ministers broke up the Government. Portland resigned, and soon afterwards died.

Perceval now became Prime Minister. Perhaps the most interesting of his appointments was that of Lord Palmerston, who, after declining the Chancellorship of the Exchequer, became Secretary-at-War, a post which he held without interruption until 1828, though it was not until Canning became Prime Minister in 1827 that Palmerston was admitted to the cabinet.

Concern was felt at this time at the state of the currency. Since 1797 the Bank of England had ceased to redeem its notes in gold, which, by 1810, was becoming scarce; in other words, bank-notes were subject to a considerable depreciation in value. There was no general agreement as to the cause of this state of affairs, though many people regarded it as evidence of the effect of the Continental System on British trade.

Since British goods were excluded from European markets, much of the volume of British imports had to be paid for by an export of gold. Some alarm was felt, and in 1810 the House of Commons appointed a Bullion Committee to consider the position. The committee recommended that the Bank should be directed to resume the practice of honouring its notes in

gold, though the change was to be brought about by degrees. The recommendation was not acted upon; the House of Commons considered that it would be undesirable to enforce cash payments before the restoration of peace, and it was not undertaken until 1819.

In the autumn of 1810, the King suffered a fresh, and, as the event proved, a final attack of insanity. When it became clear that the King's affliction was not merely temporary in character a Regency Act was passed, conferring upon the Prince of Wales the position of Regent, but placing some restrictions upon his exercise of royal power. The Act was for one year only, and it was provided that in the event of the King's recovery, of which there was for a time some hope, the authority of the Regent should lapse. Before the expiration of this year it became certain that the King's malady was permanent, and an Act was passed to establish a permanent regency. It was at first expected, as in 1788, that the Regent would replace the Tory ministry with an administration of Whigs. But he was not so fully in sympathy with the Whigs as he had been in his earlier years; he was offended at the attitude of some of the Whig lords on the question of restrictions upon his authority; and he refrained from dismissing Perceval.

Spencer Perceval was assassinated in the lobby of the House of Commons by a person of unsound mind in May, 1812. He was succeeded as Prime Minister by Lord Liverpool, who held the office for fifteen years. He was a man of great ability and wide experience, who held less extreme views than some of his colleagues on most of the important political questions of his time. Several of those who served under him were destined in course of time to fill the office of Prime Minister, but in political sagacity Liverpool was the equal of the best of his colleagues and the superior of most of them. No other statesman of his time could have retained for so long a period the confidence of the public and the respect and submission of the men of such varied views as were to be found in his cabinets.

Lord Liverpool's ministry began in a period of utter depression—the result of the strain of twenty years of warfare, of the effect upon British trade of the Continental System, and of the extension of the use of machinery in industry. Recent harvests had been bad, the market price of corn and the retail price of bread were high, and many people of the working classes lacked employment. The ultimate result of the introduction of ma-

chinery into industry is to cheapen and extend production and so to increase employment, but its immediate effect is to reduce the number of operatives. Popular distress in the industrial districts was extreme, and it was not to be expected that starving men should look beyond their immediate sufferings. They attributed their plight to the introduction of machinery, and in 1811 and 1812 there were outbreaks of machinery riots in several parts of the country. Mobs of unemployed workmen attacked factories and destroyed machinery, and the disorder grew so serious that an act was passed making the destruction of machines a capital offence. The measure was effective; outbreaks of rioting became less frequent, and in course of time they ceased.

The whole attention of the Government was now concentrated on the prosecution of the war (and of the war with the United States, which lasted from 1812 to 1814). In the internal administration nothing of sufficient importance to demand special notice occurred until after the final overthrow of Napoleon in 1815.

CHAPTER VII

TORY ADMINISTRATION AFTER THE NAPOLEONIC WAR

THE ministry of Lord Liverpool, who came into office in 1812, lasted until 1827, and, though Liverpool retired in that year, the Tories did not fall from power until 1830. The period was one of depression and distress; a very large part of the working-class population of the country lived in a state of poverty, and even of destitution, both before and after the peace of 1815.

In the many new towns which had sprung up as a result of the development of the factory system houses which were lacking in the most elementary requirements of health and decency were erected for the accommodation of factory workers. They were crowded together side by side and back to back in narrow mean streets which inevitably developed into slums. Drainage and water supply were deficient, infectious diseases were common, and death rates were high. The unsatisfactory conditions under which work was carried on in the factories are well known. The buildings were often dirty, ill-lit, and ill-ventilated, and they were crowded with dangerous machinery from which the worker was not protected. There was no effective legal restriction upon the hours of work, and wages were so low that a man was unable to support his wife and family upon his earnings, and women and children as well as men were forced to seek factory employment.

In the country the houses were not crowded so closely together as in the factory towns, though gross overcrowding of people existed within the cottages. The changes which had taken place in English agriculture in the eighteenth century had been to the disadvantage of the agricultural labourer. The textile work which had formerly been carried on in the cottages had been transferred to the factories; rights of common had disappeared; wages had fallen to such an extent that the labourer could no longer support his family. Throughout the period of the French wars and for many years afterwards a system of relief, which had been begun at Speenhamland, in Berkshire,

in 1795, prevailed in nearly every part of the country. Money from the funds for the relief of the poor was granted to labourers to supplement their wages. During the continuance of this system there was no hope of improving the condition of the labourer. The farmer paid only the lowest wage to his men, for if he gave them more they would receive less from the parish fund and would be no better off. For that reason they had no incentive to work harder in order that they might receive higher remuneration by giving more valuable service. The poor rate was so heavy that some farmers found agriculture to be no longer profitable, and farms were abandoned. While the system involved, in effect, the payment of part of the farmer's wage-bill out of parish funds, it pauperised the labourer and destroyed his self-respect.

The return of peace in 1815 was not accompanied by any improvement in the condition of the working classes in either town or country. In some respects, indeed, their condition changed for the worse, for to other hardships was added uncertainty of employment. Many thousands of men were discharged from the fighting forces and from the arsenals and munition works, and for some years the problem of unemployment was grave. These men might have been absorbed into industry within a reasonable time if trade had been flourishing, but it was not. The years immediately following the peace were years of trade depression, for the countries of Europe were exhausted by the war and were too poor to buy British goods. Manufacturers were unable to dispose of their products, and factories reduced their output. Some were closed altogether, while others worked on short time. Wages fell to starvation level.

The burden of taxation was heavy. The National Debt now stood at £831,000,000. The income-tax, which had been imposed in 1798 as a war tax, was abandoned; a Government proposal to continue it at half its former rate was defeated. Yet national income had to be raised in some way, and a schedule of heavy customs duties on many hundreds of commodities was rigidly enforced. The effect of the existence of an army of unemployed men and women was to reduce wages to the lowest possible point; the effect of the taxation system was to make high prices higher.

Agriculture was in a bad way after 1815. During the war the difficulty of importing food had led to the cultivation of

more and more land in order to produce food for a steadily increasing population. Farmers obtained good prices for their corn, and landowners secured high rents for their land. This state of affairs could not be expected to continue after the return of peace, when corn might be imported without hindrance, and landlords and farmers ought to have been prepared for a lowering of rents and prices. But the landed interest was all-powerful in Parliament, and it was determined not to surrender its prosperity without a struggle. In 1815 a Corn Law was passed which prohibited the importation of wheat while the price in the English market was below eighty shillings per quarter. It was hoped that the Corn Law would be advantageous to the landed interest without being detrimental to the general public. Some degree of stability of price was expected. It was supposed that, if the price of wheat fell below eighty shillings per quarter, the cessation of foreign imports would prevent a heavy drop; if the price rose in times of scarcity, the influx of foreign wheat would moderate the rise.

The actual effect of the Corn Law of 1815 was not what was expected by its promoters. Bread remained dear, and the poor suffered; the price of wheat was not stabilised, and the landed interest did not secure the anticipated advantages. In the ten years following the enactment of the Corn Law violent fluctuations occurred in the price of wheat. In 1817 the price reached one hundred and eighteen shillings per quarter; in 1822 it fell to thirty-nine shillings. In a single year (1816) it varied between fifty-four shillings and one hundred and seven shillings. Farming became a mere gamble, and many farmers were ruined; yet the price of bread remained at famine level.

National prosperity could not be restored until trade began to revive. One serious hindrance to a recovery of trade lay in the continued suspension of cash payments by the Bank of England. The value of the bank-note by comparison with gold varied from time to time. At one time during the war a five-pound note had been worth no more than £3 11s.; in a year or two it rose in value to £4 10s.; then it fell again. No business man cared to enter into long-term contracts for which he might be paid in bank-notes whose value at the time of payment he could not possibly foresee.

The discontent of the working classes with their hard lot was expressed from time to time in disturbances which varied from petty local riots to movements which might almost be

regarded as attempts at rebellion. In 1816 a meeting at Spa Fields, Bermondsey, developed into a riotous outbreak in the course of which gunsmiths' shops were looted and an attack upon the Tower of London was projected, though not carried out. In the following year a number of men began a march from Manchester to London in order to present a petition to the Prince Regent. Each man carried a blanket for use at night; for this reason the marchers were known as Blanketeers. Their movement ended in fiasco; the procession melted away before reaching London. Later in the year an extensive rising occurred in Derbyshire, where a large number of armed men dominated part of the county until they were dispersed by troops. The year 1818 was less disturbed, but in 1819 meetings to demand parliamentary reform were held in many large towns. In Manchester a meeting for this purpose, arranged to take place in St. Peter's Fields, was to be addressed by a well-known demagogue named Hunt. The magistrates became alarmed and ordered the arrest of Hunt and other leaders of the meeting. Soldiers were employed to disperse the crowd, and several people were killed and many others were injured, the affair being known as the Manchester Massacre, or the Battle of Peterloo.

The responsibility for dealing with disorder lay with the Home Secretary, Lord Sidmouth, with whom was closely associated Lord Castlereagh, the Foreign Secretary. They were opposed to the agitation for parliamentary reform, and the policy of repression with which their names are associated appeared to contrast sharply with Castlereagh's opposition to the repressive action of the Holy Alliance abroad. But before these statesmen are condemned for their efforts to suppress disorderly agitation it should be remembered that they had lived through the revolutionary period and that they had seen attempts at political and social reform in France followed by violence and bloodshed and long years of warfare. They felt that a repetition of this disastrous sequence of events must be avoided at all costs, and, though their reasoning may be criticised as faulty, they should be given credit for honesty of purpose and for a desire to save the country from horrors which they regarded as likely to occur if reform should be attempted. Moreover, it can hardly be maintained that the powers with which the Government was invested by Parliament were used to excess; a parliamentary committee in 1818 came to the conclusion that ministers had shown discretion in the exercise of their powers.

In 1817 the Habeas Corpus Act was suspended for a year, so that, as in the time of the French Revolutionary War, the Government was empowered to imprison suspected persons without immediately bringing them to trial. The continuance of agitation led to the passing, in 1819, at the instance of Lord Sidmouth, of the Six Acts, which are generally regarded as oppressive in the extreme, though an examination of their provisions reveals little to which exception could properly be taken. Three of the acts were directed against military training, the possession of arms, and seditious libels; another imposed a stamp duty on political pamphlets; one was intended to expedite the administration of justice; and one prohibited the holding of public meetings without the sanction of the authorities. Only the last of these measures can be regarded as really restrictive of constitutional liberty. With regard to the others, it can hardly be maintained that the Government was acting tyrannically in taking steps to prevent the outbreak of armed revolt or in restricting the spread of seditious libels.

It must not be thought that the upper classes were either ignorant of or indifferent to the plight of the poor at this time. But, apart from their fear of revolution and its possible results, they were deterred from doing anything to improve social conditions by the dismal economic views which then held the field. It was thought that the wages which were paid to the workers came out of a "Wage Fund" which could not be increased. If the wages of any section of the working classes were raised, those of some other group must be diminished. If any general advance in wages were attempted, the increase would be taken from the amount of money available for use as fresh capital. Consequently, industry would decline, there would be less employment, men would be thrown out of work, and the increased competition for this smaller amount of employment would cause a fall of wages to their former level, and probably below it.

Another reason for the general disinclination to embark on measures of social reform was to be found in the increase of the population. Attention had been drawn to this phenomenon by the Rev. Thomas Malthus, in his *Essay on Population*, which was first published in 1798 and was reissued several times in the early years of the nineteenth century. It was feared that the numbers of the people would be in time so great that food would not be available for all. Every increase in numbers would in-

volve an increase in the competition for employment, and the greater the number of workmen the smaller must be the share of the Wage Fund to which each man would be entitled. The philanthropist who would relieve distress by feeding the hungry and tending the sick, by securing higher wages for the poverty-stricken and bringing about healthier conditions of existence and a lower death-rate, was compelled to hesitate by the thought that hunger and disease might be providential devices for limiting the numbers of the people. Attempts to improve conditions, however well meant, were thought to be likely to result in making them worse.

These depressing views were not well founded. The modern economist does not admit the existence of a fixed Wage Fund, and contends that the greater the amount that can be produced the greater the share of the workman (i.e. his wages) may be. Nor are the views of Malthus generally accepted. The production of food in the nineteenth century has more than kept pace with the increase of population, and the people were far more prosperous at the end of the century than at the beginning. But while the older views prevailed no improvement was possible. While men really believed that any attempt to better social conditions would result in making them worse the attempt would not be made.

George III died early in 1820, and the Prince Regent succeeded his father, with the title of George IV. He had been exercising royal functions for many years, so that his accession to the throne involved no change of policy or of ministers. Early in the year there was some public alarm at a conspiracy to murder members of the cabinet. A number of men under the leadership of Arthur Thistlewood gathered in a garret in Cato Street, with the intention of attacking the ministers in a house in Grosvenor Square when they were assembled for a dinner party. The Government was warned of the plot; the conspirators were arrested, and Thistlewood and some of his friends were put to death, while others were sentenced to be transported.

For some months the attention of Parliament and the nation was occupied with the King's domestic affairs. His marriage to Caroline of Brunswick had taken place in 1795, and they had one child, the Princess Charlotte, who died in 1817. The Prince and Princess of Wales, as they then were, had not lived together for a long time, and for some years before her husband's

accession to the throne Caroline had lived abroad. When George IV became King, Caroline returned to England, and for a time was received everywhere with popular acclamation. George wished to obtain a divorce from her, and Lord Liverpool introduced a Bill of Divorce into the House of Lords. The Bill passed through the Upper House by narrow majorities, and the Prime Minister, realising that the House of Commons was unlikely to accept it, withdrew it. Had Caroline been wise she would have remained content with this victory, but, relying upon popular support, she determined to present herself at Westminster Abbey for coronation with the King. By his orders the doors of the church were closed to her, and she had to drive away amid the jeers of the people, who by this time had ceased to side with her. She fell ill, and shortly afterwards died.

The retirement of Sidmouth in 1821 and the death of Castlereagh in 1822 led to a reconstruction of the ministry, and a number of moderate Tories took office. Beside Canning, who became Foreign Secretary, the most important of the new men were the Home Secretary, Sir Robert Peel, and William Huskisson, President of the Board of Trade. As a consequence of these changes the policy of repression which had been maintained by Sidmouth and Castlereagh was abandoned, or at least seriously modified, and the reign of George IV was marked by the introduction of a number of reforms.

Peel was by no means new to political life. He had been Chief Secretary for Ireland from 1812 to 1818, and though he retired from office in the latter year he remained active as a private member of Parliament. In 1819 he was chairman of the committee which recommended the resumption of cash payments by the Bank of England, a measure which was begun forthwith and completed by 1821. As Home Secretary in the Liverpool ministry he proved to be a capable and enlightened administrator. At that time the criminal law was in great need of reform. The penalty of death was prescribed for over two hundred offences which were called "felonies." This excessive severity defeated its own object, for some felonies were of so trivial a nature that juries were reluctant to convict persons charged with minor crimes for which the punishment was so terrible. Peel was not the pioneer in the work of criminal law reform; for many years Sir Samuel Romilly and Sir James Mackintosh had tried to humanise the criminal code, and some

degree of success had attended their efforts. But Peel dealt with the problem on a more extended scale. He was able to remove more than a hundred offences from the list of capital crimes. (Later in the century his work was continued by others, and at the present time the penalty of death may be inflicted for only four crimes—murder, treason, piracy, and destroying a royal dockyard.) In 1829, when Peel was Home Secretary in the Wellington ministry, he completed this branch of his work by the establishment of the Metropolitan Police Force. Until this time London had been patrolled by the watchmen, many of whom were elderly and inefficient. The new force consisted of young, athletic constables who were trained for their work and were capable of maintaining order in the streets by arresting criminals, however strong and violent. Under the new state of affairs there was a reasonable chance of wrongdoers being apprehended. Crime was punished less severely but more certainly, and a long step was taken towards its reduction.

An important measure of 1824 was an act which gave a limited degree of recognition to trade unions. These organisations had been made illegal by the Combination Laws of 1799 and 1800. For many years Francis Place, a master tailor, had accumulated a mass of argument and evidence in favour of their repeal, and he succeeded in interesting Joseph Hume, a member of Parliament, in the matter. The House of Commons appointed a committee, under the chairmanship of Hume, to consider the question, and it reported in favour of relaxing the Combination Laws. This was done by the Act of 1824. The immediate effect was somewhat disconcerting; many unions were formed, strikes occurred, and acts of violence took place. The opponents of trade unionism pressed for the repeal of the Act and the re-establishment of the Combination Laws. A new act was passed in 1825, to some extent limiting the freedom conceded in the previous year; it permitted workmen to combine for the purpose of negotiating with their employers on the subject of wages and hours of labour, but penalties were imposed for acts of violence committed in the course of strikes.

William Huskisson was a believer in free trade, and extended the work of which the first faint beginnings can be traced back to Walpole and Pitt. He assisted industry by lowering or discontinuing the import duties on a number of raw materials, including silk, wool, and iron. Realising too, that the

continuance of the Navigation Acts was likely to be detrimental to British maritime interests, since other nations were threatening to pass laws against British shipping, he secured the assent of Parliament to the principle of reciprocity. By the Reciprocity of Duties Act, 1823, the Government was empowered to treat with foreign states on the basis of relaxing the Navigation Acts in favour of their shipping if they gave equal privileges to British vessels. Within the next few years treaties were made with most of the important maritime nations in the world, and though the Navigation Acts were not formally repealed until 1849 they were henceforth of little importance.

Early in 1827 Lord Liverpool resigned office on account of illness, and Canning succeeded him as Prime Minister. The new premier was in favour of Roman Catholic Emancipation, and for this reason several of the ministers, including Peel and Eldon, who had served under Liverpool declined to hold office under him. He was forced to invite some of the Whigs to enter his cabinet, which, nevertheless, remained weak. Canning was in poor health throughout his premiership, and in August, 1827, he died. A stop-gap ministry under Lord Goderich carried on the government of the country until the beginning of 1828, when quarrels amongst ministers caused its fall.

The long period of Tory rule was brought to a close with the ministry of the Duke of Wellington, from 1828 to 1830. Peel resumed the office of Home Secretary, and exercised influence almost equal to that of the Duke. Ministers assumed office as opponents of Roman Catholic claims; their principal achievement was the passing, in 1829, of the Roman Catholic Relief Act.

Before the Catholic question came to the front Parliament was faced with a Whig proposal for the relief of Protestant Dissenters. Under the Corporation Act of 1662 and the Test Act of 1673 they were debarred from holding certain public offices. The grievance had long been no more than nominal, since an Indemnity Act which suspended the imposition of penalties under these two acts had been passed every year since 1727. It was now proposed to repeal the Test and Corporation Acts, and, in spite of vigorous Tory opposition in the House of Lords, the repeal was carried.

Agitation for Catholic Emancipation had existed since the beginning of the nineteenth century, but there was no strong public feeling in favour of it in Great Britain. The attitude of

George III made English ministers reluctant to take a strong line upon it. Motions on the subject were occasionally debated in the House of Commons, and after the establishment of the regency in 1811 it became an open question. The Whigs favoured it; the Tories were divided. Lord Eldon, Lord Sidmouth, and Peel were opposed to it, while Castlereagh and Canning were prepared to support it.

In Ireland the Catholic Association was formed, under Daniel O'Connell, to press the Catholic claims, and in 1828, at an election for County Clare, O'Connell himself became a candidate, although as a Roman Catholic he was disqualified from sitting in Parliament. His opponent, Vesey Fitzgerald, was popular, and, though a Protestant, was a supporter of the Catholic claims. The peasantry of the county followed the bidding of their priests, and voted for O'Connell. He was returned by a large majority, and it was believed that at the next general election most of the Irish counties would return Catholics, and that if they were not allowed to take their seats rebellion would break out.

Wellington and Peel both now realised that it was necessary to give way. They were not alarmed by the prospect of rebellion; there had been revolts in Ireland on many occasions throughout its history, and there was no reason to think that greater success would attend this one than any other. It could be suppressed, if necessary, but the Duke of Wellington had seen too much of war to be fond of it, and regarded any other solution of the problem, even the grant of Catholic Emancipation, as preferable to the shedding of blood. Peel contemplated resigning, but, when the Prime Minister informed him that this course might bring about the fall of the Government and the loss of the proposed measure of relief, he retained his post. In the House of Commons he defended his change of policy as the only course possible under the circumstances.

The Roman Catholic Relief Act was applicable throughout the United Kingdom and not only in Ireland, and it removed nearly all civil and political disabilities from Roman Catholics. They became eligible for membership of Parliament (though this right was denied to their priests) and for many public posts from which they had hitherto been excluded. The Act of Settlement, however, was left untouched. No papist might succeed to the Crown, nor hold the offices of regent, Lord Chancellor of Great Britain and of Ireland, and Lord Lieutenant

CHAPTER VIII

TORY FOREIGN POLICY (1815-30)

THE foreign policy of Great Britain after the conclusion of peace in 1815 was directed by Lord Castlereagh until his death in 1822, and after that event by George Canning, who died in 1827. Lord Dudley and Lord Aberdeen successively held the office of Foreign Secretary in the short ministries towards the end of the reign of George IV, though the direction of foreign policy in the Wellington administration was closely supervised by the Prime Minister.

The Congress of Vienna, which was interrupted by the return and restoration of Napoleon, completed its work after his fall. It met to settle the affairs of Europe after the disturbances of the past twenty-three years. It wished to make such arrangements as would strengthen the states in proximity to France in order to diminish the prospect of a renewal of trouble from that country, and it sought to take precautions against revolutionary outbreaks in future.

It is unnecessary to describe in detail the territorial rearrangements made at Vienna, but it may be mentioned that four fairly strong states—Holland, Rhenish Prussia, Switzerland, and Piedmont—touched the eastern frontier of France. Holland was strengthened by the addition of Belgium, the former Austrian Netherlands. Austria was compensated for the loss of her former Netherlands possession by the acquisition of Lombardy and Venetia in the north of Italy, and for many years she occupied a commanding position in the Italian peninsula. The territories of Prussia were enlarged, and she became the dominant power in North Germany. Russia acquired Finland and most of Poland. Great Britain retained most of her conquests overseas, including the Cape of Good Hope, which she had restored to the Dutch in 1802, but had reconquered in 1806. The German states formed a loose Confederation under the leadership of Austria.

The obvious criticism of the decisions of the Congress of Vienna is that they were made in the interests of the sovereigns

and without consulting the wishes of the peoples of Europe, and since, during the nineteenth century, popular wishes proved to be more powerful than royal interests, the settlement failed to be permanent. The history of Europe in the nineteenth century is largely the record of the undoing of the work of the Congress of Vienna.

Before, however, the Congress is condemned for its disregard of democratic and national sentiments the point of view of its members should be considered. Europe had passed through a terrible experience. It had been bled white by more than twenty years of war, which had begun as an outcome of the French Revolution. The continent needed peace, and the monarchs and statesmen of Europe thought that the surest way to secure it was to prevent revolution, and if, in spite of their efforts, revolution should appear, to crush it.

Alexander I, the Tsar, a man of deep religious feelings, proposed that the chief powers should enter into an alliance with a view to the conduct of European affairs upon Christian principles. The idea was accepted, and the Holy Alliance of Russia, Prussia, and Austria, with some lesser powers, was formed. The Tsar's suggestion was, indeed, one which it would have been difficult to decline, since all the powers of Europe (except Turkey) were nominally Christian, and could hardly be expected to declare that they were unwilling to see European affairs conducted upon Christian principles. The character of the alliance would obviously depend upon the definition of the phrase. Metternich, the Austrian Chancellor, saw clearly that the monarchs of Europe would regard the suppression of revolutions and the maintenance of absolute monarchy as entirely in harmony with the doctrines of the Christian religion. The idea of the Divine Right of Kings, which had been the basis of Stuart monarchy in Great Britain in the seventeenth century, was, in fact if not in theory, held by the despotic monarchs of Europe in the nineteenth century. Metternich, therefore, supported the proposal, and for some years the Holy Alliance was on the watch to put down all revolutionary, and therefore unchristian, tendencies in any part of Europe.

Castlereagh and Wellington, the representatives of Great Britain at Vienna, were by no means in sympathy with the policy of suppression which was being developed at the Congress. Yet Metternich and the Tsar were desirous of securing the

adhesion of Great Britain to the Holy Alliance, and, as stated above, it was not easy to give a direct refusal to the invitation to join. Great Britain, a Christian country with an established Church, ought to be in sympathy with the professed ideals of the Alliance. A way out of the difficulty was found in the fact that George III was insane and that his duties as King were being performed by the Prince Regent. It was intimated to the members of the Holy Alliance that the Regent, although he was much interested in, and felt great sympathy with, the aims of the Alliance, had no authority to commit the country to it.

Great Britain agreed, however, to send representatives from time to time to congresses of the powers, whenever important matters should arise which should call for joint European action. A Quadruple Alliance of Russia, Prussia, Austria, and Great Britain was formed to uphold the terms of the Treaty of Paris. This Quadruple Alliance differed from the Holy Alliance in that the latter was committed to a definite line of policy; by joining the Quadruple Alliance Great Britain merely promised to maintain the terms imposed upon France and to meet other powers in congress when necessary.

The first congress to be held in consequence of the formation of the Quadruple Alliance met at Aachen in 1818, and, while Castlereagh was not in all points in agreement with the Holy Alliance powers, no definite breach occurred. It was decided to withdraw the army of occupation from France, although the period for which it had been decided to maintain it had not expired. The British proposal to invite France to join the Quadruple Alliance was accepted by the other powers with some hesitation. The inclusion of France obviously made some difference to the original aim of the Alliance, which was, in effect, to prevent an increase of French power. The Tsar suggested that it should undertake a general supervision of European affairs and that periodic meetings should be held. Great Britain, however, was opposed to the tendency of the Holy Alliance powers to interfere in the affairs of other states, and, though Castlereagh agreed to send British representatives to future congresses summoned for specific purposes, he would not assent to periodic meetings.

By 1820 popular revolts had occurred in Spain, Portugal, and Naples. A congress was called to meet at Troppau to consider the condition of the kingdom of Naples. Great Britain was represented at the Congress, but the British envoy

was ordered to report to his Government upon the proceedings and was not entrusted with full powers. In view of the proximity of the kingdom of Naples to Austrian possessions in the north of Italy, Castlereagh was not at this time prepared to object to Austrian action to restore order in Naples. But the Congress went further, and issued the Protocol of Troppau, which asserted the right of the powers of Europe to intervene in order to suppress revolution in any country in which it had broken out. Castlereagh made formal protest against the protocol, and from that time concerted action between Great Britain and the Holy Alliance powers was impossible.

A further congress, held at Laibach in 1821, authorised Austrian intervention in Naples, in spite of British protest, and within a few months the absolute authority of the King of Naples was re-established.

The popular movement in Spain had not yet been suppressed, and a congress assembled in 1822 at Verona to deal with it. Castlereagh drew up a memorandum in which he stated the grounds of his objection to Holy Alliance intervention in Spanish affairs. Before the Congress of Verona actually met, the strain of the conduct of public business proved to be too much for him, and he took his own life.

Few statesmen have been more entirely misunderstood in his own time or more grossly misrepresented by historians than Castlereagh. In his own time and for many years afterwards he was regarded as a supporter of the Holy Alliance and an advocate of the policy of suppressing revolutionary movements. The more vigorous opposition to the Holy Alliance which developed while Canning was Foreign Minister has been looked upon as an entire change of British policy. In more recent times a truer estimate of Castlereagh has gained ground, and it is recognised that he was not less sincere than Canning in opposing the repressive policy of the despotic monarchs. He held that each state should be left to settle its own internal affairs without foreign interference. This policy of non-intervention was continued by Canning, who adopted Castlereagh's memorandum as the basis on which the British representative at Verona was to act. Such difference as existed between the policies of the two statesmen was only of degree. Castlereagh's opposition to the action of the Holy Alliance was limited to protest; Canning was prepared in certain cases to go further, to oppose force with force, and, where the Alliance

threatened to intervene to support an absolute monarch against a revolt, to send British forces to assist the rebels.

Canning was unable to prevent Holy Alliance action in Spain. The Alliance determined to restore the absolute power of the King of Spain, and France, in which reactionary influences had for some time been gaining ground, was authorised to send an army into Spain. Canning stipulated, however, that there should be no permanent French occupation of Spanish territory and no acquisition by France of any Spanish colony. Subject to the observance of these conditions he agreed that Great Britain should remain neutral. The French overran Spain and suppressed the constitutional party.

The Spanish colonies in America had been in revolt for many years. Action was contemplated by the Holy Alliance in order to compel them to submit. Great Britain had established trading connections with these states; if they were brought again into subjection to Spain the Spanish monopoly of colonial trade would be restored, and British commercial interests would suffer. Canning proposed joint action with the United States with a view to the ultimate recognition of the South American republics. The United States was unwilling to act in concert with Great Britain, but President Monroe sent a message to the American Congress in which he asserted that the United States did not admit that there was any further field in America for colonial extension by European powers, and that it would regard with disfavour any attempt of the absolute powers of Europe to extend their system to the American continent. This was followed by Canning's formal recognition of the independence of the revolted colonies. The Holy Alliance powers protested, but they accepted the situation.

For some years affairs in Portugal were unsettled. The King granted a constitution, but his second son, Miguel, led a reactionary party in revolt against his father. Miguel was encouraged by the French, and Canning sent a naval squadron to the Tagus to support the King. Miguel's revolt collapsed, and for the time being the Portuguese constitution was saved. A few years later a further attempt by Miguel, with French and Spanish assistance, to seize the Portuguese crown was met by the dispatch of British troops to Lisbon. Both Spain and France disavowed any intention of intervening in Portuguese affairs, and the British force was withdrawn.

The Turkish Empire had for some time been declining in

strength, and in 1821 the Greeks, who had long suffered from Turkish oppression, broke into revolt. Much sympathy was felt with them, and many English volunteers went to Greece to fight for them. Byron, the poet, was among these adventurers; he died of fever at Missolonghi in 1824.

In spite of the natural reluctance of Holy Alliance powers to assist a rebellion, the Tsar was disposed to support the Greeks, since he was at the head of the Orthodox, or Eastern, Church. Canning was in sympathy with the Greeks, but he adhered as long as possible to his policy of non-intervention. He did not wish to see the Turkish Empire weakened; if the Tsar intervened on behalf of the Greeks Russian influence would be extended in the Balkans, and a movement would begin which might culminate in the Russians securing an outlet to the Mediterranean. For this reason Austria also was hostile to the Greek movement. Neither Great Britain nor Austria was willing to sanction the break-up of the Turkish Empire if Russia should reap advantage from it.

In 1825 the Sultan obtained help from Egypt, and a fleet and an army were sent under the command of Ibrahim Pasha to assist in the suppression of the revolt. Ibrahim and his troops committed such atrocities in the Morea that the Tsar determined to intervene on behalf of the Greeks, no matter what the attitude of other governments might be. Canning, also, felt that intervention could be delayed no longer, and sent Wellington to St. Petersburg to try to arrange for joint Anglo-Russian intervention. Nicholas I, who became Tsar in 1825, agreed with Great Britain to offer to mediate between Turks and Greeks on the basis of the establishment of Greek independence under Turkish suzerainty. The French Government associated itself with this agreement, but the Sultan would not accept the proposal. By the Treaty of London, in 1827, the three powers agreed to compel Turkey to accept their mediation. Their fleets were sent to the eastern Mediterranean and encountered the Turkish and Egyptian fleets at Navarino. War had not been declared against Turkey, but a chance shot from a Turkish ship led to a battle in which Ibrahim's fleet was destroyed. The Battle of Navarino was almost accidental, but it placed the achievement of Greek independence beyond reasonable doubt.

The death of Canning in 1827 and the acceptance of the premiership by Wellington in 1828 involved a change of

British policy towards the question of Greek independence. Wellington referred to the Battle of Navarino as an "untoward event," and he withdrew from participation in eastern affairs. The Tsar declared war; Russian troops advanced into Turkish territory in 1828, and the Sultan was compelled to give way. By the Treaty of Adrianople, in 1829, Greece was recognised as a self-governing state under Turkish suzerainty. The Greeks refused to accept this arrangement as a solution of the problem, and in 1832 the kingdom of Greece was recognised as fully independent.

It had been Canning's aim to prevent Russia from acting by herself on behalf of the Greeks, lest she should gain an accession of influence in the Balkans; by Wellington's change of policy Canning's plan was frustrated. Through the withdrawal of Great Britain from the settlement of Greek affairs Russia scored a diplomatic victory. Her prestige increased, and the Greeks felt that it was due to her rather than to any other power that the success of the struggle was due. The liveliest suspicion of Russian designs in the Balkans existed in the minds of British statesmen throughout the nineteenth century.

CHAPTER IX

PARLIAMENTARY REFORM

THE English Parliament had existed as an institution since the reign of Edward I. Of considerable importance during the later Middle Ages, it had declined during the Tudor Period, and in the seventeenth century it might have suffered the fate of the States-General in France had not the financial difficulties of the Stuart kings compelled them to summon it from time to time. At the Revolution of 1689 it established its supremacy in the state, and from that time it was recognised as an essential feature of the constitution.

Until the latter part of the eighteenth century Parliament might be regarded as, to a reasonable degree, representative of the nation, or, at least, of the landed interest in the nation. But, with the growth of the industrial towns in the north and west of England and in the Clyde valley, the system of representation was felt to be in need of revision. The matter was raised now and then in the eighteenth century, but after the outbreak of the French Revolution it was shelved for many years.

By 1830, the year in which the Whigs returned to office after nearly seventy years of almost continuous Tory rule, the House of Commons needed reform in many ways. With the increase in population and the growth of new towns in industrial areas there was great need for a redistribution of seats. Under the old system every county, irrespective of its size and population, was represented by two members, a state of affairs which called for rectification in view of the great differences which existed between county and county. Nor were towns represented on a population basis. Every English town which was represented had two members in Parliament. (The City of London had four members.) When the House of Commons was instituted the towns which were directed to send representatives to it were the most important in the country. The Tudors had summoned members from many other places, of little importance but of known loyalty, in order that the House of Commons

might contain a majority of men devoted to the interests of the Crown. Some towns developed into important places, others declined into insignificance, new towns came into existence, but the system of representation remained unchanged. By the nineteenth century some parliamentary boroughs had virtually ceased to exist. Old Sarum was an uninhabited hillock, Gatton was a ruined wall within a private park, Dunwich had been destroyed by the encroachments of the sea—but members representing these places still sat in the House of Commons. Many of the small parliamentary boroughs were under the control of great nobles. If a place had a mere handful of electors, all of whom were the servants or tenants of a great lord, they were in practice bound to follow his directions, and the members for the borough were appointed by him. It has been estimated that from one-third to one-half of the members of the House of Commons were the nominees of the patrons of such places, variously called rotten boroughs, pocket boroughs, or nomination boroughs. Occasionally the members appointed by these patrons were young men of capacity who in this way obtained an introduction to political life. Not infrequently a pocket borough was advertised as being for sale; a wealthy man could thus purchase a seat in Parliament.

In the counties the franchise was limited to landowners. Every person who possessed freehold land to the annual value (i.e. the rental value) of forty shillings was entitled to vote at elections, but no landless person was entitled to the privilege. Wealthy merchants and manufacturers who happened not to be landowners, and even the occupiers of copyhold or leasehold land, were debarred from exercising the franchise. In the parliamentary boroughs there was no uniformity in the qualification for voting. In some of them the franchise was so wide as to include the potwallopers (persons who lived in a house which contained a hearth on which a pot could be boiled). In other towns the right was restricted to the occupiers of "ancient tenements," or to the "freemen," or (especially in Scotland) to the town council.

Elections were fought and won by corrupt methods. Bribery was everywhere practised openly, and intimidation was even more common than bribery. Electors dared not vote in opposition to the wishes of their employers, lest they should lose their employment; of their landlords, lest they should be evicted from their houses or lands; or, if they were shopkeepers,

of their important customers, lest business should be transferred elsewhere. Voting was carried on openly, and candidates and their agents could ascertain for whom each vote was cast. An election might last for some days, and the state of the poll was declared daily, and even hourly. If, towards the end, only a narrow margin separated the candidates, both sides would make the most strenuous efforts to secure victory, and substantial offers might be made to the last few electors for their votes.

The electors were limited in their choice to landowners, who alone could become members of Parliament. Every representative of a county was required to be in possession of an income of at least £600 per annum from land; every town member must have at least £300 per annum from land. It followed that not only were working men excluded, but wealthy merchants and manufacturers who had not invested part of their fortunes in the purchase of a landed estate were unable to enter the House of Commons.

Until the passing of the Roman Catholic Relief Act in 1829 membership of the House of Commons was limited to members of the Church of England (or the Church of Scotland) and to Protestant Dissenters. Persons of the Jewish faith, and men who professed no religious views, were still excluded, and many years were to elapse before they were admitted.

It is clear that parliamentary reform was needed in several ways, and the arguments in its favour appeared to be conclusive. But the old system was not without its champions. Nor need it be assumed that the High Tories, who opposed reform, were insincere in their defence of the existing system. This system, they contended, had worked well; there was no reason to think that a rearrangement of seats and of votes in accordance with mathematical principles would produce a better Parliament. It might have the opposite effect, since many young men of ability had devoted themselves to the service of their country in a political career and had obtained their chance to enter Parliament by securing, from a great noble, nomination for membership of the House of Commons as representative of a pocket borough; under a reformed system such men would be unable to compete with the *nouveaux riches* from the industrial regions, and there was no ground for assuming that the latter would give better service to the country than the men they displaced. It was further contended that agriculture had always been vital to national well-being, and that agricultural prosperity would be

most surely maintained by continuing the connection of both members and voters with the land. Finally, it was pointed out that while Parliament was yet unreformed the country had been guided with safety through times of revolution and war in Europe. Whatever mistakes the Tories had made in the conduct of the wars with France, they had lacked neither patriotism nor determination; it was open to question whether the nation would have done so well under a more democratic system.

As mentioned above, some efforts had been made in the eighteenth century to bring about parliamentary reform, but the outbreak of the French Revolution caused the question to be dropped, and it was not revived until some years after Waterloo. William IV, who became King in June, 1830, was believed to be in favour of reform, and in the general election which followed later in the year many seats were gained by Whigs and moderate Tories. The desire for parliamentary reform was no doubt stimulated by the continuance of popular distress which had prevailed since the conclusion of peace in 1815, and the movement was encouraged by the success of revolutionary movements in France and Belgium. Wellington and Peel, who still held office, were opposed to reform, but their Government was defeated in the new House of Commons on a matter of minor importance, and they resigned. Earl Grey, the leader of the Whigs, became Prime Minister, and formed an administration of Whigs and Canningites (moderate Tories); the latter soon became absorbed in the Whig party.

In 1831 Lord John Russell, a member of the Government, introduced a Reform Bill in the House of Commons. The King approved the proposal, but the Tories in the House of Commons offered strenuous opposition. The second reading of the Bill was carried by a majority of one, but the Government was defeated when the measure was in committee. (A bill has to pass several stages in each House. Of these, the most important are second reading, in which the bill is discussed as a whole, and committee, in which its details are considered.) Grey advised the King to dissolve Parliament. In the new House of Commons there was a large majority for the Bill, which passed through all its stages without difficulty.

The struggle was now transferred to the House of Lords, where Tory peers were in the majority, and the Bill was defeated on second reading. Popular anger was manifested in rioting in many parts of the country. In 1832 a third attempt was

made to carry the Bill, and this time the Lords did not venture to reject it on second reading, but made alterations in committee. Grey thereupon pressed the King to agree to the creation of sufficient new peers to ensure the Bill being carried. William, by this time, had been alarmed by the manifestations of popular disorder, which revived in his mind the old fear of revolution; in any case, he was strongly opposed to a wholesale creation of peers. Grey resigned, and the King asked Wellington to form a ministry.

The Duke, from a strong sense of duty, undertook the task, and it is possible that he would have been willing to act against his personal views to the extent of agreeing to a modified reform bill if he could have secured the co-operation of Peel. But Peel remained opposed to the movement, and, as the reformers commanded a majority in the House of Commons, Wellington was forced to abandon the attempt. The King recalled Grey, who resumed office on the understanding that, if necessary, new peers would be created. To avert the swamping of the House of Lords with new peers Wellington and a number of his Tory followers withdrew from the House, and the Bill was passed.

The Reform Act of 1832 dealt only with the franchise and the distribution of seats; no attempt was made in it to deal with the other aspects of the problem referred to above. In the matter of distribution of seats no more was attempted than the removal of the worst anomalies; no general scheme of representation based on arithmetical principles was evolved. Of towns hitherto represented, those with a population of less than two thousand lost their representation in Parliament, and those with more than two thousand but less than four thousand people lost one member. There were fifty-six of the former and thirty-one of the latter, so that one hundred and forty-three seats were available for distribution among populous counties and towns hitherto unrepresented. Twenty-two large towns received two members each, twenty other towns received one member each, and most of the remaining seats were assigned to counties and divisions of counties. Eight additional seats were given to Scotland and five to Ireland. It should be observed that, while towns of over four thousand people which had been previously represented retained the right of sending two members to the House of Commons, many places of equal or greater size but of recent growth failed to secure the right to

send even one, and that the representation of large towns was not made proportionate to population.

The county franchise, hitherto limited to the forty-shilling freeholders, was enlarged by the addition of holders of copyhold land of the annual value of ten pounds, of leaseholders of land worth fifty pounds per annum, and of leaseholders who held "long leases" of land worth ten pounds per annum. In the towns a much greater degree of uniformity of franchise was introduced than had existed before. Every householder who occupied a house worth ten pounds per annum received the right to vote.

The results of the passing of the Reform Act were not altogether what were expected. The enfranchisement of new classes of electors led to the establishment in Parliament of industrial and commercial interests which in time rivalled the landed interest in importance, though for many years the latter retained its predominance. The right to vote, in town and country, was entrusted to the middle classes—to shopkeepers and prosperous citizens in towns, but not to artisans and factory workers, and, in the country, to farmers but not to labourers. The working classes, which had been prominent in the public agitation which had preceded the reform, were disappointed with the Act. They had hoped to be enfranchised, and they had expected that the passing of the Act would be the prelude to the improvement of social conditions. Though something was accomplished in this respect much remained to be done; wages were still low, employment remained uncertain, prices of food-stuffs were still high. The discontent of the working classes during the next few years was voiced in the Chartist movement.

CHAPTER X

GREY AND MELBOURNE

THE general election which followed the accession of William IV in 1830 resulted in a considerable strengthening of the Whig party in the House of Commons. Wellington resigned soon afterwards, and Earl Grey became Prime Minister, with Lord Melbourne as Home Secretary and Lord Palmerston as Foreign Secretary. For the first two years of its existence the ministry was engaged in the struggle for parliamentary reform, which has already been described. The passing of the Reform Act was followed by a general election, as a result of which the first reformed House of Commons contained a very large majority of Whigs and extreme Radicals, while the Tories were reduced to a mere handful—no more than a quarter of the House. The Tory group included William Ewart Gladstone, who entered Parliament for the first time.

The arguments, political and economic, which for many years had weighed against social reform had by this time lost a good deal of their force. The fear of revolution was less pronounced, and, if the orthodox economic view (that organised efforts to improve social conditions must necessarily fail, and might even make them worse) still received a great deal of support, it was challenged by the Humanitarians. The leader of the Humanitarian movement was Lord Ashley, afterwards Earl of Shaftesbury, a nobleman of great piety, whose high character, aristocratic position, and great wealth inspired public confidence and attracted public support for the proposals which he commended. Some of the reforms attempted at this time appeared to be inadequate and half-hearted, and they were criticised by impatient reformers on this ground. It was not always realised that the attempts were necessarily experimental. The old economic theories were not yet disproved. It was prudent to hasten slowly. A reform was a step in the dark, and if the step were not too great it might be retracted if the evil results predicted by the economists should appear; if on the other hand, the results were beneficial, the scope of the reform might be extended.

When the new House of Commons met, in February, 1833, it began the work of reform with enthusiasm. One of the most important measures of the year was an act for the abolition of slavery throughout the British Empire. Much of the prosperity of Bristol and Liverpool in the eighteenth century had been based on the slave trade, which was abolished, so far as Great Britain was concerned, in 1807, and by other countries of western Europe in 1815. But slavery itself still continued in America and other parts of the world, and the efforts of the Humanitarians succeeded in 1833 in bringing it to an end within the British Empire, in spite of the attempts of the planters to influence public opinion against the proposal. The legal status of slavery ceased, and every slave became technically a free man. It was provided, however, that for a number of years the freed slaves should work as "apprentices" for their former masters, and that they should be paid wages for only a quarter of their working hours. (This system gave rise to discontent, and it was abolished in 1838.) The sum of £20,000,000 was voted by Parliament as compensation to the slave-owners for the loss of their property. The parts of the British Empire specially affected by the emancipation of the slaves were the West Indies and the Cape of Good Hope. The prosperity of the West Indies was maintained only by the existence in Great Britain of differential rates of duty on colonial and foreign sugar, the rate on the latter being very high. When, in the ministry of Lord John Russell, the rates were reduced, the decline of the West Indies set in, since the planters could not compete in the production of sugar with the mainland regions of South America and with Cuba, in which slave labour still existed. Many planters were ruined, and sugar estates were sold for a fraction of their former value. In South Africa the abolition of slavery was resented by the Boers, and it was one of the causes of that ill-feeling between Dutch and British which was a feature of the later history of the colony. The amount of compensation was regarded by slave-owners as inadequate, and the method of payment was certainly open to criticism. Claims had to be lodged in London, and as the planters and farmers were thousands of miles away they had to employ agents in London whose commission and expenses were deducted from the amount of compensation awarded.

The abolition of slavery was one of the greatest reforms ever undertaken by a British Parliament. No advantage was

anticipated from it; a large sum of money was granted as compensation; and the economic and social results of the change were likely to be detrimental to colonial prosperity. The reform was carried on moral grounds alone.

The emancipation of the slaves in 1833 was not a mere isolated act; it was an assertion of policy for the future. Much territory has been incorporated in the British Empire since 1833, and in many of the new acquisitions slavery has been found to exist. In all cases steps have been taken to end it as quickly as possible, although the work has often taken some time, and has not been accomplished without serious economic disturbance.

Several acts dealing with abuses in connection with child-labour in factories had been passed between 1802 and 1831, but for various reasons they had been ineffective. Children were still being compelled to work for long hours, they were still subject to ill-treatment by brutal overseers, they received very low wages, and their health, comfort, and interests were neglected by their employers. But the public conscience was being aroused on this matter, and in 1833 a Factory Act was passed which was to prove more effective than earlier acts. In order to secure its observance factory inspectors were appointed with power to inflict fines upon manufacturers who disregarded the law. The Act applied to all textile factories (except silk mills); it prohibited the employment of children under nine; children between nine and thirteen were not to work for more than nine hours per day, or forty-eight per week, and they were to attend school; the working hours of young people from thirteen to eighteen years of age were limited to twelve per day and sixty-nine per week, and they were not to work at night. The Act was by no means fully enforced. The age of the child-worker could not be accurately determined, and the provisions for his education were sometimes disregarded. The number of inspectors was too small to ensure complete enforcement. Yet the Act marked a great advance, and was the basis on which the codes of factory law in this and other countries were built up.

The affairs of the East India Company engaged the attention of Parliament in 1833. The Company had lost its monopoly of trade with India in 1813, though it had retained the China trade. It now ceased to trade, and continued to exist merely as a governing organisation, subject to the Board of Control. The

chief British official in India, hitherto known as the Governor-General of Bengal, was henceforth to be styled Governor-General of India. Indians were declared to be eligible for appointments in the Company's service.

Some attention was given to education. Schools for the children of the poor were already being built, by the National Society and the British Society, in many of the towns and villages of the country. In 1833 the sum of £20,000 was granted, to be divided between these two societies, for the purpose of assisting in the building of schools. The grant was, to be annual, and it was increased to £30,000 in 1839, in which year inspectors of schools were appointed.

An act was passed for the rearrangement of certain Irish Church revenues. Deductions were to be made from the incomes of some overpaid ecclesiastics, and a few bishoprics were to be suppressed; these measures were not to be enforced, however, until vacancies occurred. The money thus set free was to be used for various ecclesiastical purposes.

The strength of the Grey ministry was by no means proportionate to its majority in the House of Commons, and in the course of the year 1834 deep dissensions appeared amongst ministers on the subject of the proper policy to be pursued in dealing with Ireland—in particular, with the suppression of disorder, the collection of tithe, and the appropriation of Church revenues. Some of the ministers resigned, and in July, 1834, Grey announced the resignation of his ministry. Lord Melbourne succeeded him as Prime Minister.

The most notable parliamentary achievement of the year 1834 was the reform of the Poor Law. This necessary work was undertaken while Grey still held office, but it was not completed until some weeks after the change of ministry. As has been mentioned in an earlier chapter, for nearly forty years poor relief had been given to supplement the low wages received by agricultural labourers, and the amount of this relief was made to vary with the size of the labourer's family and with the price of bread. Though some such system was necessary in the early stages of the French Revolutionary War in order to avert the actual starvation of the very poor, it pauperised the labourers and deprived them of all inducement to work harder and secure higher wages. The poor rate was very heavy, in some places exceeding twenty shillings in the pound. By the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834 this system was brought to an end.

The Act was based on the principle that a man ought to support himself and his family by his own exertions. "Outdoor" relief was to be given only to the aged and to those who were unfit for work, and no poor relief was to be given to people who were in receipt of wages. The destitute might obtain parochial relief in order to avoid starvation, but they were compelled to enter the workhouse. The Elizabethan principle that each parish should support its own poor was retained, but in order to secure economy and efficiency of administration parishes were grouped into Unions. In each Union a Board of Guardians, elected by the ratepayers, was established. This Board had to manage the business of poor relief, but its powers were limited, and most of its decisions were subject to the approval of the Poor Law Commissioners in London. (This body was replaced in 1871 by the Local Government Board, and this, in 1919, by the Ministry of Health.)

The Melbourne ministry was not strong, and it was seriously weakened by the transference of one of its ablest members, Lord Althorp, from the House of Commons to the House of Lords (in consequence of the death of his father, Earl Spencer). Melbourne discussed the position with the King, who in November, 1834, decided to dismiss his ministers. Wellington was invited to form a ministry, but he advised the King to send for Sir Robert Peel. Peel, who was in Italy, hastened home and accepted office as Prime Minister.

The history of Peel's first ministry is given in the next chapter. It is sufficient to mention here that he issued the Tamworth Manifesto, and appealed to the country. His party, known henceforth as Conservative, gained some seats, but not enough to give it a majority. In the new Parliament Peel was defeated, and resigned. Melbourne returned to office.

The outstanding achievement of the year 1835 was the reform of the municipal corporations. In many towns the councils were close corporations. The councillors held office for life, and when a vacancy occurred the remaining members of the council chose the new member. In this way the control of the affairs of a town remained permanently in the hands of a small group of families, and corruption was common. After the Parliamentary Reform Act of 1832 all the householders of a town, except the poorest, were entitled to vote at parliamentary elections. To deny them the control of the affairs of their own town after they had been given a voice in the direction of

national affairs would have been absurd; the reform of the corporations was a logical consequence of parliamentary reform. By the Municipal Corporations Reform Act of 1835 three-quarters of the members of town councils were to be elected by the ratepayers for a period of three years, at the end of which time they were to be eligible for re-election. As a concession to the adherents of the old system it was provided that the remaining one-fourth of the members of a council should still be chosen by their colleagues. They were to be known as aldermen, and were to be elected for six years. They also were to be eligible for re-election. The system has worked well in practice. In many towns it has become customary to appoint as aldermen men who have served for many years as councillors, and to reappoint the aldermen from time to time until their death or voluntary retirement. Their presence adds dignity to a council and provides some degree of continuity in its work.

In the year 1836 several measures of importance were passed. Until this time the only legal method of marriage was by a clergyman of the Church of England (except in the case of Jews and of Quakers). In order to relieve Nonconformists of the necessity of attending church for weddings, a Marriage Act was passed which permitted them to be married in their own places of worship. Another method of marrying was established by the same act; a wedding might take place in the office of a superintendent registrar of marriages without any religious ceremony at all.

The amendment of the law relating to marriages was associated with a wider scheme for the registration of births, marriages, and deaths. Registration was valuable for other reasons than the mere compilation of statistics; without it other measures of social reform might be ineffective. Rules for limiting child-labour were of little use while the age of a child could not be proved. In course of time it became possible to demand proof, in the form of a certificate of birth, of the age of a child who was seeking employment in a factory or mine. Associated with the registration of deaths was a statement, in each case, of the cause of death, and, if this could not be certified by a medical practitioner, a coroner's inquest had to be held. Such information drew attention to the most prevalent causes of death and encouraged medical research which has had beneficial results on the health of the population.

In the same year some changes were made in connection with

the finances of the Church of England. The clergy had from time immemorial enjoyed the right to tithes, and the rector of a country parish was accustomed to enter the fields at harvest time and mark off one sheaf of corn out of every ten. These sheaves were removed to the tithe barn and became the parson's property. By the Tithe Commutation Act of 1836 it was arranged that tithe should be paid in money, and that it should be based on the average price of corn for the preceding seven years. The Ecclesiastical Commission was established at this time also. The Commissioners were to be some (afterwards all) of the bishops, with some other persons prominent in the Church of England. They were given control of certain ecclesiastical revenues in order to use them for the advantage of the Church and the spread of religion.

William IV died in 1837, and the accession of his niece Victoria brought to an end the connection of the royal family with Hanover, which had existed since 1714. Victoria was only eighteen years of age when she came to the throne. She had a high sense of responsibility and of her duty to the nation, but it was inevitable that she should have very little understanding of the nature of her position as a constitutional sovereign. Lord Melbourne undertook the task of instructing the Queen in the principles of parliamentary sovereignty and ministerial responsibility. The excellence of his training influenced Victoria throughout her reign; his work in this direction may be regarded as the greatest service rendered by him to the nation.

At the general election of 1837 the Whigs retained a majority in the House of Commons, but their zeal for reform appeared to be exhausted. No more great projects of reform were brought forward. As mentioned above, the education grant was in 1839 enlarged to £30,000 per annum, and in the same year a scheme for a system of penny postage was sanctioned, to take effect in 1840.

Early in 1840 the Queen was married to her cousin, Albert of Saxe-Coburg. The Prince Consort was a man of high character, but for many years his actions were viewed with suspicion; it was feared that his influence with the Queen might be exercised in opposition to that of her ministers and that he might aspire to take an active part in the government of the country. In course of time his good qualities won general recognition, and his early death (in 1861) was deeply regretted by the nation.

The Government was in danger of defeat in 1839, and Melbourne resigned. Peel was invited by the Queen to become Prime Minister, but difficulties, described elsewhere, prevented the formation of a ministry, and Melbourne resumed office, which he retained until 1841. In the general election of that year the Whigs were left in a minority. A vote of censure on the Melbourne ministry was carried in the new Parliament, and the period of Whig rule came to an end.

CHAPTER XI

PEEL

SIR ROBERT PEEL, the son of a wealthy cotton spinner of Bury, Lancashire, was born in 1788. He entered Parliament in 1809, and three years later he became Chief Secretary for Ireland, a position which he held until 1818. Although at this time he was an opponent of Roman Catholic Emancipation, he proved to be a sympathetic administrator with an understanding of Irish needs. After his resignation of the Chief Secretaryship he was for some years out of office. During this period he became chairman of the committee of the House of Commons which recommended the resumption of cash payments by the Bank of England.

In January, 1822, Peel became Home Secretary, an office which he held, with a short intermission in 1827-8, until 1830. The reforms which he brought forward in this period have been mentioned elsewhere. His opposition to Catholic Emancipation was overcome by the persuasion of Wellington. By this change of attitude he incurred the enmity of a section of the Tory party, and at the general election of 1830 he lost his seat for the University of Oxford. He was elected for Westbury, however, and afterwards became member for Tamworth.

During the period of Whig administration Peel was the leader of the Tory opposition in the House of Commons. He was a strenuous opponent of the Reform Bill, but he recognised that it was impossible to reverse it, and he advised his party to accept the new state of affairs and to endeavour to profit by it. Upon the dismissal of Melbourne's first ministry in November, 1834, the King selected Peel to form a Government. He was travelling in Italy at the time, and until his return the Duke of Wellington took charge of the Government. When Peel reached England he formed his first ministry and prepared for a general election. In his address to the electors of Tamworth he announced the adhesion of his party, to be known henceforth as the Conservative party, to the principle of parliamentary reform, and he outlined a scheme of moderate reform to which

the party was pledged. This address, known as the Tamworth Manifesto, was circulated throughout the country, and it had a considerable effect. The Conservatives gained a number of seats, but not enough to give them a majority in the House of Commons. Peel retained office for some weeks after the meeting of the new Parliament and made several proposals of a progressive character, but he was defeated again and again, and in April, 1835, he resigned office. His statesmanlike attitude during the difficult period of his first ministry enhanced his reputation.

The second Melbourne ministry was never strong, and in 1839 Lord Melbourne resigned office. Queen Victoria sent for Peel and asked him to form a ministry. There were at court, in attendance upon the Queen, certain ladies, known as Ladies of the Bedchamber, who were appointed at the beginning of the reign when the Whigs were in office, and who, consequently, were Whig. Peel wished to replace them by Conservative ladies; he contended that as Prime Minister he could not enjoy the confidence of the Queen if she were subject to Whig influence. The Queen objected to the dismissal of her ladies, and Peel declined to go on with the task of forming a ministry. The difficulty was overcome by Melbourne, who resumed office, which he held until 1841. The Bedchamber Question gave rise to much controversy at the time, and it has frequently been discussed since. It is possible that Peel really regarded the control of appointments to the royal household as vital to the success of his ministry. As a matter of fact the political influence of the ladies of the household was small and it tended to become insignificant. It is equally possible that the real reason for Peel's action was his belief that the time was not yet ripe for the formation of a Conservative ministry. If he formed a Government and dissolved Parliament and for the second time failed to obtain a majority, it was likely that his political career would be at an end. The Bedchamber Question provided him with a pretext for not entering upon office. That this is at least a possible explanation of his attitude seems to be indicated by the fact that when he formed a ministry in 1841 he was prepared to treat the household appointments as non-political.

A general election in 1841 resulted in the defeat of the Whigs. The Conservatives obtained a majority of over seventy, and Peel became Prime Minister for the second time. Serious problems

had to be faced. The condition of the working classes was still unsatisfactory; Irish affairs needed attention; wars threatened; and national finance was in a condition which might almost be described as desperate.

While Melbourne had been Prime Minister the budget had shown a deficit nearly every year. Yet the people suffered under a heavy load of indirect taxation, and no increase of revenue could be expected from this source. Peel realised that heavy import duties were harmful to industry and trade, and he determined to recast the whole system in the interests of trade as well as of national finance. In 1842 he removed the duties from a large number of articles of raw material and of goods wholly or partly manufactured, and he reduced many other duties. Such a course necessarily involved a heavy loss of revenue, which Peel was confident would ultimately be made good by increased trade. For a year or two, however, a deficit was certain, and he proposed to tide over this period of transition by establishing for three years an income-tax of sevenpence in the pound on all incomes of more than £150 per annum. It was to be a temporary impost, and its removal was expected when the full benefits of the change of system were experienced. Although the yield of the income-tax was greater than Peel had expected, there was a deficit in 1843; in 1844, however, there was a surplus. In 1845 the time had come for the discontinuance of the income-tax, but Peel's experiment had proved so successful that he decided to retain the tax in order to be able to remove a further batch of import duties and abolish all export duties.

During the period of the second Peel ministry a number of industrial reforms became law. The report of a commission of inquiry into the conditions of labour in coal mines revealed a state of affairs which shocked the public conscience and called for immediate legislation. Small children—girls as well as boys—were employed for long hours in opening and shutting doors in the colliery galleries, in hauling trucks laden with coal, and in carrying coal to the top of the pits. In 1842 Lord Ashley introduced a bill to prohibit the labour in mines of females and of boys under thirteen. The Bill became law, but the influence of the colliery owners was strong enough to induce Parliament to lower the minimum age for boys from thirteen to ten years. A Factory Act was carried in 1844 in the face of strong opposition from the manufacturers; the minimum age for children in

factories was lowered from nine to eight, but their hours of labour were reduced and more effective arrangements were made for their education, while the limitation of hours that had hitherto applied to young persons under eighteen was extended to women.

Perhaps the most important of Peel's proposals, apart from his measures for promoting free trade, was the Bank Charter Act of 1844. The Bank of England was reorganised and was given a virtual monopoly of the issue of bank-notes (although this monopoly did not become complete until 1921). A limited amount of paper money might be issued on the security of the debt due to it from the Government; all notes in excess of this amount had to be covered by an equivalent amount of gold in the Bank's reserve. One of the results of this arrangement has been that the Bank of England has become a "banker's bank"—a central bank with which other banks are accustomed to deposit a large part of their reserves.

Unrest continued in Ireland, and Daniel O'Connell, the champion of Catholic Emancipation, put himself at the head of a movement known as Young Ireland, which aimed at the repeal of the Act of Union and the re-establishment of a separate Irish Parliament. Large public meetings were held and there was a prospect of serious disorder. The Government acted firmly; troops were sent to Ireland, a huge open-air meeting which was to be held at Clontarf in October, 1843, was prohibited, and O'Connell was arrested. He was tried for conspiracy and convicted, but the verdict was reversed on appeal, and he was released. His influence declined, and for a time Ireland was more peaceful.

Peel attempted to conciliate the Roman Catholic Irish by making a regular annual grant to Maynooth College, the institution in which Irish Roman Catholic priests were trained. The suggestion was strongly opposed in England, where it was criticised as an "endowment of popery," but it was carried in Parliament. Peel also established university colleges, known as Queen's Colleges, at Belfast, Cork, and Galway. These institutions were to be unsectarian, and it was hoped that the religious antagonism of Catholics and Protestants would diminish if the young people of both religions received a university education side by side. But religious bigotry was too strong. Both parties denounced the "godless colleges," and they received few students.

Early in his ministry Peel appointed a Royal Commission under Lord Devon to inquire into the abuses connected with land tenure in Ireland. The report of the Devon Commission, issued in 1845, drew attention to the practice of evicting tenants without compensating them for the improvements which they had made on their farms. A bill was introduced in the House of Lords to enable outgoing tenants to claim compensation for improvements, but the hostility of the peers compelled its withdrawal, and the abuse which it was intended to remedy continued for another quarter of a century.

For some years an agitation had been carried on in England for the repeal of the Corn Laws. The Anti-Corn Law League was founded privately in 1838 and made its first public appeal in the following year. At the general election of 1841 it received little support, and the Conservative majority had been pledged to the continuance of the Corn Law. Peel, though a protectionist, was anxious that the cost of bread should not press too hardly upon the poor, and in 1842 he made a reduction in the sliding scale of corn duties which had been established in 1828.

The Anti-Corn Law League continued its efforts, and, though every year a motion for the repeal of the Corn Laws was defeated by a large majority in the House of Commons, Peel was gradually convinced by the arguments brought forward by Cobden and Bright, even before the matter became acute on account of the occurrence of the Irish famine. In 1845 there was a serious outbreak of potato disease, and the failure of the crop threatened famine in Ireland. Peel realised that the corn duties must be abandoned—yet he was reluctant to take action which would involve a breach of his pledge to maintain them. He proposed to his cabinet that the duties should be suspended, but many of his colleagues and a large part of the rank and file of the Conservative party disagreed with him. The Whig leader, Lord John Russell, declared in favour of total repeal, and Peel resigned. Russell was invited by the Queen to form a ministry, but failed, and Peel had no option but to resume office. In the House of Commons he proposed a reduction of the corn duties; they would be imposed on a sliding scale for the next three years, during which period the duty would never exceed ten shillings per quarter. After 1849 there would be a duty of only one shilling per quarter. In the debates a large part of the Conservative party, led by

Disraeli and Lord George Bentinck, opposed the suggested reduction, but the Whigs supported Peel, and his proposals were carried.

A renewal of disorder in Ireland led to the introduction of a new coercion bill, and Disraeli marshalled the malcontent Conservatives against it. The Whigs were disinclined to support the proposal, and Peel was defeated. He resigned office immediately, and his career as a minister of the Crown came to an end. He died in 1850.

It was by Peel that the Conservative party in its modern form was evolved from the old Tory party. Yet he bears the reputation of having split the party three times. His advocacy of the restoration of cash payments alienated some of the Tories; his change of front on Catholic Emancipation involved a further split; his conversion to free trade resulted in a final division. For the next twenty years there were in English political life three parties—the Whigs, the Protectionist Conservatives, and the Peelites, or Conservative Free Traders. During the Russell ministry Peel and his followers supported the Whigs, in order that the free trade victory of 1846 might be maintained. In later years the two parties became closely allied, and they ultimately coalesced, forming the modern Liberal party.

Peel was honourable and high-minded, and was held in universal esteem. He was no mere politician devoted to the interests of his party. While accepting the views and principles of his party, he was willing to consider every question without prejudice, and when he was convinced that it was necessary in the interest of the nation he did not hesitate to change his views. He was too great to be a good party man; he was the greatest British statesman in the first half of the nineteenth century.

CHAPTER XII

RUSSELL

LORD JOHN RUSSELL entered Parliament as a Whig in 1813. From the first he was an advocate of parliamentary reform, and it was on his motion that the corrupt borough of Grampound was disfranchised in 1821. He was a supporter of the movement for Catholic Emancipation, and in 1828 he proposed a resolution in favour of the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts. This was carried, and the Government yielded to the expressed wish of the House of Commons and brought in a repeal bill which became law. When in 1829 Roman Catholic Emancipation was proposed Russell warmly supported it.

He became Paymaster-General in the Whig ministry of Earl Grey, and the task of introducing the Parliamentary Reform Bill was entrusted to him. When Lord Melbourne formed his second ministry, in 1835, Russell became Home Secretary and Leader of the House of Commons. In 1839 he was Secretary of State for War and the Colonies, a post which he retained until the fall of the Whig ministry in 1841.

In the general election of 1841 many Whig members lost their seats, but Russell was returned for the City of London. Upon the retirement of Melbourne he became leader of the Whig party. The question of the Corn Laws was coming to the front; in 1845 Russell committed himself and his party to support of the repeal movement. The repeal in the following year was carried by Peel only with the aid of Whig votes.

Upon the fall of Peel in 1846 the Whigs returned to office, and Lord John Russell became Prime Minister, with the support of the Peelite group as well as of his own party. The condition of Ireland engaged the attention of the new ministry. The repeal of the Corn Laws was only one step towards the relief of Ireland. The famine was by no means at an end, and the population was decimated by hunger and fever. The Government at first hesitated to offer direct relief by the distribution of food. Relief works upon which starving peasants might be employed were set up. The results were in every way un-

fortunate. The works were for the most part valueless in themselves; the wages offered, though sufficient for no more than bare subsistence, were attractive to men who might still be working on the land, so that they deserted their holdings, and tillage declined; speculators made fortunes in the sale of food; officials connected with the relief schemes were corrupt. At length the relief works were discontinued, and free distributions of food were made in those districts in which distress was greatest. The Irish-poor law was modified in 1847. Boards of Guardians were directed to give outdoor relief to the necessitous poor and to supply medical services where required, and the poor rate was to be collected from landowners instead of from tenants. By 1848 the worst of the trouble was over, but death and emigration had substantially reduced the population of Ireland.

Many Irish landlords had been ruined by the famine. They had been unable to collect their rents, and their estates had been mortgaged up to the hilt. The Encumbered Estates Act of 1849 simplified the procedure in the sale of land, and under its provisions many estates changed hands. As was to be expected, the purchasers were not philanthropists but men who regarded their acquisitions as investments out of which profits might be made. Although the management of estates was improved, rents remained high, defaulting tenants were subject to eviction, and emigration went on.

For many years social conditions in Great Britain had been unsatisfactory. Low wages, high food-prices, and uncertainty of employment contributed to the discontent of the working classes. Many working people hoped that the reform of Parliament in 1832 would be followed by an improvement in their condition, and their disappointment in this respect was voiced in the Chartist movement.

The People's Charter included six points. It demanded a vote for every man, and, in order that every vote should be of the same value, equal electoral districts. If, by the grant of these two points, the common people were enfranchised, they might not be satisfied to be represented in Parliament by wealthy landowners; it was probable that working men would choose men of their own class to represent them at Westminster. But such members could not leave their work in order to make laws at Westminster unless they were supported, and the Charter called for the payment of members of Parliament and

for the abolition of the property qualification. Finally, that Parliament might really reflect the will of the people, voting by ballot and annual general elections were included in the Chartist demands.

As far back as 1839 a Chartist petition had been prepared for presentation to the House of Commons, which declined to receive it. Serious rioting occurred in some parts of the country, especially in South Wales and at Birmingham; property was destroyed and lives were lost before order was restored. The movement died down, but in 1848, encouraged by the revolutionary movements of that year on the continent, the Chartists tried again.

Arrangements were made for a monster procession from Kennington to Westminster to present to the House of Commons a gigantic petition for the granting of the Charter. The Government became alarmed; a large number of special constables were enrolled, and the Duke of Wellington was placed in command of sufficient troops to deal with any contingency. Rain fell on the day of the procession, which diminished in numbers as it approached Westminster. It was not allowed to cross Westminster bridge, and the petition was taken to the House in three cabs. When it was examined it was found that many of the signatures, purporting to be those of notable people, were forgeries, and many others were duplicates, while whole pages of signatures were in the same handwriting.

The Chartist movement thus ended in ignominy and ridicule. The real cause of its failure is to be found in the increasing prosperity of the working classes. The worst of the distress which had characterised the early years of peace was passing away, and the unemployment problem was being solved by the construction and working of the railway system. Moreover, the trade unions, to which large numbers of working men belonged, were hostile to Chartism, or, at least, they held coldly aloof from it.

It may be observed that the demands embodied in the Charter were not so much unreasonable as premature. There has never been any likelihood of the holding of general elections every year, but the other points of the Charter have long since been accepted, and in some ways Chartist demands have been exceeded. Even such advanced reformers as the Chartists did not think of asking for votes for women as well as for men.

The revolutionary fervour of 1848 was felt in Ireland as well

as in England. The Young Ireland movement had died down but had not died away. Agitation was kept alive by a paper, the *United Irishman*, edited by John Mitchel, who in 1848 was transported to Bermuda for fourteen years for seditious propaganda. A feeble rising led by Smith O'Brien was suppressed, and the death sentence passed on O'Brien was commuted to transportation for life.

The legislative record of the Russell ministry was not remarkable. In 1847 an agitation for a ten-hour factory day, which had been going on for some years, was brought to a successful issue by the passing of a Factory Act which was introduced by Mr. Fielden. Unfortunately, the Act was so framed that factory owners were able to employ women and children in relays, so that it was impossible for inspectors to determine whether the law was being observed. An amending act, brought forward in 1850 by the Home Secretary, Sir George Grey, defined the hours of work and so prevented evasion of the law.

English trade had, since the middle of the seventeenth century, been subject to a code of laws known as the Navigation Laws. In 1823, by the Reciprocity of Duties Act, the Government had been empowered to extend privileges to the ships of foreign nations which were willing to accord similar rights to British ships. Many such commercial treaties had been arranged since 1823, so that the Navigation Acts had lost much of their former importance. Nevertheless, they still existed. But the principles of free trade were gaining ground, and as the Navigation Acts involved restrictions upon trade they were bound to go. The Canadian Government protested against their continuance, and in 1849 they were repealed, with the exception of the rule which limited the coasting trade of Great Britain to British vessels. This was repealed in 1854.

A further step in the direction of free trade was the reduction of the sugar duties. The rate of duty levied on sugar from British colonies was fourteen shillings per hundredweight, while on sugar from other sources the duty was so high as to be prohibitive. The rate on foreign sugar was now reduced to twenty-one shillings, and, after five years, to fourteen shillings, thus abolishing the preference to the colonies.

The Australian Government Act of 1850 empowered the Government to set up representative Legislative Councils in the Australian colonies as a step towards responsible government.

These Councils were established in Victoria, South Australia, and Tasmania in 1851; New South Wales had possessed its Legislative Council since 1842. Within a few years responsible government was in operation in the four colonies.

Pope Pius IX in 1850 authorised the appointment in England of Roman Catholic bishops with titles taken from important cities, and subject to an Archbishop of Westminster. Anti-papal feeling was aroused, and by the Ecclesiastical Titles Act, passed in 1851, the assumption of territorial titles by Roman Catholic bishops was made illegal. The Act was carried with some difficulty, neither the Irish members nor the Peelites viewing it with approval. Before long feeling died down. The Act was not enforced, and it was quietly repealed in 1871.

The Foreign Secretary in the Russell ministry was Lord Palmerston, whose conduct of affairs is described in another chapter. He was the strongest member of the ministry, and his enforced resignation in 1851 fatally weakened it. Russell did not long survive the loss of his chief lieutenant. Early in 1852 the Government was defeated on a proposal to strengthen the militia, and resigned.

Russell held three different offices for short periods in the Aberdeen ministry, and, though he accepted the post of Colonial Secretary under Palmerston in 1855, he resigned after a few months. For some years the two Whig leaders were hardly on sufficiently good terms to work together. Russell was critical of the Palmerston Government, and he supported the vote of censure which was carried against Palmerston in 1857.

By 1859, however, they were reconciled, and Russell served as Foreign Secretary in Palmerston's second administration, sharing with the Prime Minister responsibility for the triumphs and the blunders of the conduct of foreign affairs. His failure to prevent the sailing of the *Alabama* and his unfortunate attitude on the Danish question are described elsewhere.

On the death of Palmerston Russell (an Earl after 1861) became Prime Minister for the second time, with a cabinet of Whigs and Peelites, but he held office for only a few months, and his ministry can be considered merely as a pendant to that of Palmerston. At this time public feeling was stirred by news of the cruelty of Eyre, Governor of Jamaica, in the suppression of a negro rising. More than four hundred persons were put to death, more than six hundred were flogged, and over a thousand houses were destroyed. A commission of inquiry

was sent out to Jamaica, and it reported that the punishments were excessive and that the destruction of property was wanton and cruel. Eyre was recalled, and an attempt was made to prosecute him, but he was not actually brought to trial. Meanwhile, the constitution of Jamaica had been suspended.

Russell had not lost his old eagerness for parliamentary reform. A bill was introduced by Gladstone in 1866; it was proposed to confer the franchise on men, who, in the towns, paid a rent of £7 per annum, or, in the counties, £14 per annum. A scheme for the redistribution of seats was embodied in a separate bill. But the Whigs disliked the proposals, and a number of them formed the "Cave of Adullam," a group which resolved to oppose the measure. The Adullamites joined with the Conservatives, and the Bill was defeated. Russell thereupon resigned. He never again held office, and he died in 1878 after having served in Parliament for sixty-five years.

Lord John Russell was a member of a family which had been consistently Whig for generations, and it was hardly possible for him to depart far from the family tradition, though his devotion to the cause of parliamentary reform represented an advance beyond the Whig philosophy of *laissez-faire*. Handicapped by inferior physique, he was nevertheless possessed of considerable intellectual power; not an orator, he was yet effective in debate; conscientious, and with that high sense of public duty which has always distinguished the English aristocracy, he was an honourable and able administrator. If his record will not compare with that of some other modern statesmen his length of political services entitles him to the respect of posterity. If he fell short of being a great statesman he may at least be regarded as a distinguished man who deserved well of his country.

CHAPTER XIII

PALMERSTON AS FOREIGN MINISTER

THE most prominent British statesman in the period following the repeal of the Corn Laws was Lord Palmerston, who already had had a long experience of political life. He was an Irish peer, and, under the terms of the Act of Union, he was eligible to represent any constituency in Great Britain in the House of Commons. Born in 1783, he entered the House in 1807 as member for Newport, Isle of Wight, after twice failing to secure election for the University of Cambridge. He remained in the Commons until his death in 1865, and he held ministerial office during nearly the whole of his political life.

In the earlier part of his career Palmerston was a member of the Tory party. He became a Junior Lord of the Treasury in 1807, soon after his entry into the House of Commons. In 1809 he was appointed Secretary-at-War, an office which he held without intermission in successive Tory ministries until 1828, though it was only in 1827 that he was invited (by Canning) to take a seat in the cabinet. He was associated with the group of moderate Tories which was prominent in the reign of George IV, and soon after Wellington became Prime Minister Palmerston withdrew from the ministry.

When the Whigs came into power in 1830 Palmerston did not hesitate to accept office as Foreign Secretary, and from that time until his death his was the dominant influence in British foreign policy. He was Foreign Secretary from 1830 to 1851, under Grey, Melbourne, and Russell, except during the Peel ministries of 1834-5 and 1841-6. The circumstances of his resignation in 1851 are narrated below. He was out of office for barely a year. Though from 1852 to 1855, under Lord Aberdeen, he held the post of Home Secretary, his interest in foreign affairs was undiminished. Upon the fall of the Aberdeen administration in 1855 Palmerston, at the age of seventy-one, became Prime Minister, and, except during the short Derby-Disraeli ministry of 1858-9, he retained the premiership until his death ten years later. In a political career which extended

over a period of fifty-eight years he held ministerial office for terms which totalled almost fifty years—a record without parallel in English history.

In his direction of British foreign policy Palmerston endeavoured to maintain British prestige and to uphold British interests in every part of the world. The general features of Canning's policy were continued by him. He was sympathetic with nationalist and democratic movements in other countries, but, in opposition to the aims of some continental statesmen, he disapproved of interference in the internal affairs of any country, so long as these affairs did not affect the interests of other states. If, however, events in one country were of such a nature as to compel the attention of others, Palmerston held that any intervention that was necessitated should take place by agreement among the powers concerned. The unwarranted interference of a single power in the internal affairs of another country might even be neutralised by British counter-intervention. Palmerston felt that special watchfulness was called for in regard to Russian aspirations in the near East, and to French designs in Belgium, Spain, and elsewhere. In his speeches and actions he was not always tactful and conciliatory, and he was accused of being unnecessarily bellicose. Criticism of his foreign policy was not always directed so much towards its results, which were often satisfactory, as towards its methods.

In July, 1830, a revolution occurred in France, as the result of which the last Bourbon king, Charles X, lost his throne, and was succeeded by Louis Philippe, Duke of Orleans. Louis Philippe was King of the French for eighteen years, and the diplomatic history of his reign is to a considerable extent a record of the hostility of Palmerston and the French king, whose aims were thwarted again and again by the British Foreign Minister.

A month after the July revolution in France the Belgians revolted against the rule of the King of Holland and asserted their independence. Palmerston and Louis Philippe were both well disposed towards them, and when the Belgian National Congress offered the crown of the new kingdom to the Duke of Nemours, a son of Louis Philippe, the French king was inclined to sanction its acceptance. Such a course, however, would bear the appearance of a revival of former French schemes of territorial extension in the north-east, and Palmerston objected. He declared that acceptance of the crown of Belgium

by the Duke of Nemours would certainly be followed by war between Great Britain and France, and the offer was declined. This, the first of a series of rebuffs administered by Palmerston to Louis Philippe, did nothing to enhance the French king's prestige with his subjects.

For some years Palmerston's attention was drawn to the state of affairs in the near East. As a result of the struggle for Greek independence Russian influence was on the increase in the Balkan peninsula, and Palmerston entertained serious views as to the extent of Russian aims. His suspicions were strengthened by the attitude of the Tsar in the quarrel which broke out in 1832 between the Sultan and Mehemet Ali. The Sultan was unwilling to give his ally the province of Syria, which the latter expected as a reward for his assistance against the Greeks. Egyptian troops, led by Ibrahim, overran Syria and invaded Asia Minor. Constantinople itself was in danger, and in order to prevent its falling into the hands of the rebels the Sultan accepted an offer of assistance from Russia. In return, he agreed to the Treaty of Unkiar Skelessi (1833), by which, in effect, the Dardanelles were to be closed in time of war to the warships of all nations except Russia. By this arrangement Russian vessels might emerge from the Black Sea to operate in the Mediterranean and, if necessary, might withdraw without fear of pursuit. Russian ascendancy at Constantinople appeared to be complete. Great Britain, France, and Austria protested, but without avail.

Peace was patched up at this time between the Sultan and Mehemet Ali, but in 1839 fighting in Syria was renewed. The Egyptian Pasha was now supported by Louis Philippe, while Russia was prepared to assist the Sultan. Palmerston realised that British interests would be seriously threatened, whatever might be the outcome of the struggle. A Turkish victory would further strengthen Russian influence in the Balkans, while an Egyptian victory would establish French influence in Egypt. Palmerston determined, by supporting Turkey, to deprive Russia of that accession of power which she would have gained if she had been allowed to act by herself. Since the Treaty of Unkiar Skelessi had been signed the Tsar had realised that an attempt to control Constantinople in Russian interests alone would provoke conflict with Great Britain and, probably, with other European powers. He was by no means unwilling to come to an understanding with Great Britain, and

he accepted the association of other powers with Russia in the settlement of the question. Austria and Prussia followed Palmerston's lead, and in 1840 the four powers formed a Quadruple Alliance to settle the Syrian question by offering terms to Mehemet Ali and, if necessary, compelling him to accept them. After some fighting, the Pasha, by the Treaty of London, 1841, renounced his claim on Syria in return for recognition of his position as hereditary Pasha of Egypt. By the Convention of the Straits, in 1842, the Tsar renounced his privilege gained by the Treaty of Unkiar Skelessi.

The affair must be interpreted as a diplomatic triumph for Palmerston over Louis Philippe. France was isolated from the rest of Europe and found herself powerless to support her ally. Louis Philippe's minister, Thiers, advised war, but the French king shrank from so hopeless an enterprise, and Thiers resigned. The prestige of Louis Philippe suffered severely in the eyes of his subjects.

There is no good ground for criticism of Palmerston's action in the settlement of the Syrian question. Had he withdrawn, as Wellington did in 1828, the position of either France or Russia would have been strengthened. Palmerston's intervention prevented either power from unduly extending its influence, and the Sultan learned to rely less completely upon Russia for protection.

Lord Aberdeen was Foreign Secretary during Peel's second ministry (1841-6). It was his aim to establish a more friendly relationship between Great Britain and France than had existed in the time of his predecessor. Guizot, who had succeeded Thiers as Louis Philippe's chief adviser, was equally anxious to cultivate English friendship, and for a time relations between the two countries were improved. France was invited to associate herself with the other powers in drawing up the Convention of the Straits in 1842. In 1844 Louis Philippe paid a state visit to London, and protestations of friendship were exchanged.

Palmerston returned to office in 1846 as Foreign Minister under Lord John Russell, and before long the friendship of Great Britain and France was seriously impaired. From the fact that friction between the two countries developed when Palmerston was in office while friendship was fostered by Aberdeen it would be tempting to infer that blame for ill-feeling should be assigned to Palmerston. This would be unfair to

him, and in both the questions—Spanish and Swiss—which divided the British and French Governments between 1846 and 1848 a consideration of the facts must lead to the conclusion that it was Louis Philippe who was at fault.

The Queen of Spain, Isabella, and her sister Luisa were both unmarried. Louis Philippe wished to arrange a marriage between Luisa and his son, the Duke of Montpensier. Such a marriage, which would involve the possibility of the union at some future time of the French and Spanish crowns (which had been forbidden by the Peace of Utrecht), was bound to excite apprehension in Great Britain. Negotiations between Aberdeen and Guizot in 1845 resulted in an agreement that Great Britain would offer no opposition to the wedding if it were postponed until after the marriage of Queen Isabella and the birth of an heir to the Spanish throne. Shortly after Palmerston's return to the Foreign Office he was informed that the marriages were about to take place, and, in fact, they were celebrated on the same day. He was indignant at Louis Philippe's breach of faith, and remained hostile to the French king until his fall. Louis Philippe gained no prestige in France or elsewhere to set against the loss of a good understanding with Great Britain.

If Palmerston was outwitted by Louis Philippe's duplicity in the matter of the Spanish marriages he was more successful in connection with disturbances in Switzerland. By the Congress of Vienna the Swiss Confederation had been declared independent and neutral. Religious strife between Catholic and Protestant cantons came to a head in 1847. The Catholic cantons formed a separatist league, the *Sonderbund*, and Metternich, the Austrian Chancellor, put forward the view that the Confederation was thereby dissolved and that the powers were entitled to intervene. Louis Philippe supported this attitude, and there appeared to be a danger that Switzerland would be partitioned among France, Austria, and Prussia. But Palmerston maintained that armed intervention in Swiss affairs was without justification, and while the continental powers were hesitating the Protestant cantons succeeded in suppressing the *Sonderbund* and restoring the Confederation. No ground for intervention remained, and Palmerston could feel that he had scored once more against the French king.

In 1848 revolutionary movements occurred in several countries of western and central Europe. Louis Philippe lost his throne, and for the second time France became a republic, the

presidency of which was secured by Louis Napoleon Bonaparte, a nephew of the Emperor Napoleon. Metternich fell from power, and in several German and Italian states attempts were made to secure constitutional government, while the Hungarians under Louis Kossuth tried to free themselves from Austrian rule. Palmerston's attitude to these movements displeased the Queen. He was sympathetic with them; she was not. Popular opinion in Great Britain was behind Palmerston, and though he was criticised in the House of Commons he was able to obtain the approval of the House for his policy.

Palmerston's popularity in the country reached its climax in 1850 in the affair of Don Pacifico. This person was a Jewish financier who, having been born at Gibraltar, was a British subject. During some riots at Athens his house had been sacked, and his claim for compensation was vigorously supported by Palmerston. A blockade of the Peiraeus was ordered, and the Greek Government yielded. This bellicose action in a rather doubtful case evoked strong criticism, and at one time it seemed possible that it might receive the censure of the House of Commons. Palmerston made a masterly defence of his policy, and the House endorsed his action.

The court took a different view. Victoria considered that Palmerston was accustomed to act without adequately consulting her in the conduct of foreign affairs. In August, 1850, she sent to him a Memorandum in which she required him, before taking action, to inform her precisely of what he proposed to do, to give her sufficient time to consider dispatches, and not to modify them after she had expressed her approval. He promised to abide by the Queen's instructions, but, in fact, he took very little notice of them.

The Prince President of France, Louis Napoleon, in December, 1851, executed a *coup d'état* by which he became virtual dictator of France, and in the following year he assumed the title of Emperor as Napoleon III. Palmerston, in a conversation with the French ambassador, expressed his approval, which he repeated in a dispatch to the British ambassador in Paris. He did this without consulting either the Queen or his colleagues. Victoria was angry at his disregard of the Memorandum, and Russell felt bound to support the Queen against the Foreign Secretary. Palmerston was required to resign, and it was widely believed that his political career was at an end.

The incident which led to Palmerston's fall is often regarded

as the last of a series of "indiscretions." It may be contended, however, that this view involves some injustice to Palmerston and some misunderstanding of his intentions. Behind his apparent jauntness and his disregard of royal injunctions there was a real determination to maintain a constitutional right—a resolve as worthy of recognition as those of other champions of constitutional orthodoxy. Palmerston recognised, what Russell and others failed to observe, that the principles of the Queen's Memorandum involved some violence to the constitution. If they had been finally accepted and embodied in the British system of government the sovereign, and not the minister, would have had the final and decisive voice in the determining of policy, and a step would have been taken towards the restoration of an absolutism which was characteristic of Tudor and Stuart rule. But in modern England it is the minister, and not the sovereign, who makes decisions, and it is the duty of the sovereign to accept the advice, formally tendered, of the minister. It is possible that Victoria did not realise the full implications of her Memorandum; it is certain that Palmerston did. He might, upon receipt of the Memorandum, have provoked a grave constitutional crisis by producing it and denouncing it in the House of Commons. He preferred to disregard it, and though his course of action led to his loss of office it is noteworthy that adhesion to the Memorandum was not required of other Foreign Ministers.

CHAPTER XIV

THE EASTERN QUESTION AND THE CRIMEAN WAR

EUROPEAN statesmen in the nineteenth century were faced with a group of problems arising out of the decay of the Turkish Empire. The Ottoman Turks in the prime of their strength had ruled over the Balkan Peninsula, Asia Minor, Syria, Mesopotamia, Arabia, Egypt, and almost the whole of the north coast of Africa. During the eighteenth century their power declined; the rulers of Algiers and Tunis became independent sovereigns, and during the second quarter of the nineteenth century Mehemet Ali, in Egypt, followed their example. The revolt of one province after another in European Turkey during the nineteenth century seemed to give further indication that the Ottoman Empire was falling to pieces.

The Balkan Peninsula contained several Christian races—Greek, Roumanian, Bulgarian, Serbian—subject to the Sultan. Turkish rule in the Balkans was characterised by occasional outbursts of barbaric savagery upon these unfortunate peoples. The sympathy of the nations of Europe was with the Christian races, and as early as 1774 Russia, by the Treaty of Kutchuk Kainardji, had been given the right to protect the Christian inhabitants of the Danubian provinces by bringing their complaints to the notice of the Sultan. Other powers, however, were unable to regard Russian action in the Balkans as disinterested, and viewed any attempt by the Tsar to champion the cause of the oppressed peoples in the south-east of Europe as a move in the Russian policy of securing an outlet to the Mediterranean. So long as Russia was willing to take up arms on behalf of the Christian races the statesmen of western and central Europe were prepared to support the Turkish Empire as a barrier against Russian advance.

The problem which Europe was called upon to solve in the nineteenth century was that of obtaining for the small Christian nations relief from Turkish misrule without sanctioning an extension of Russian influence, and it was complicated by the jealousies and suspicions existing among the great powers, and, later, among the Balkan nations.

This problem, or rather, this group of problems, dealing with lands and peoples from the Danube to the Nile, is commonly referred to as the Eastern Question. It should not be confused with the Far Eastern Question, which is concerned with matters arising during the nineteenth century out of the awakening of Japan and China to the influences of European civilisation, matters in which Russia also was interested.

Some aspects of the Eastern Question—Greek independence, and the Turco-Egyptian struggle for Syria, which ended in Egyptian independence—have been referred to in other chapters of this book, and it is proposed to deal in this chapter with events which brought the question to a head in the middle of the nineteenth century and involved several European states in the Crimean War.

The fall of Palmerston in 1851 deprived the Russell ministry of its strongest member, and it fell from power early in 1852. During the year 1852 a Conservative Government was in office, but it had no majority in the House of Commons, and before the end of the year it was defeated. It was replaced by a coalition ministry of Whigs and Peelites, under the leadership of Lord Aberdeen, and it was during the Aberdeen administration that the Eastern Question became acute and the Crimean War broke out. Lord John Russell was Foreign Secretary under Aberdeen. Lord Palmerston was Home Secretary, but he continued to pay close attention to foreign affairs, and he supported his old chief in pressing for the maintenance of a vigorous and determined policy towards Russia.

The Tsar, Nicholas I, had for some years been desirous of reaching an understanding with Great Britain on the Eastern Question. He visited England in 1844, and, in conversation with Lord Aberdeen, who at that time was Foreign Secretary under Peel, hinted at the possibility of a partition of Turkish dominions. Nothing came of this, but Nicholas was convinced that Aberdeen was pacifically inclined, and in 1853 (Aberdeen now being Prime Minister) the Tsar, in conversation with the British ambassador at St. Petersburg, referred to Turkey as "the sick man of Europe." His metaphor implied the necessity of making arrangements for the disposal of the sick man's possessions after his death. He suggested that Great Britain should seize Egypt and either Crete or Cyprus, while Russia established subject principalities in the Balkans. But he failed to allay British suspicions; British ministers declined to con-

sider his proposals, and they disclaimed all desire for territorial aggrandisement.

Between the settlement of the Syrian Question in 1841 and the outbreak of the Crimean War in 1854 the Tsar had thus made two attempts to reach an agreement with Great Britain with a view to a permanent settlement of the Eastern Question. His good faith can hardly be called in question. He had given proof of it by his readiness to co-operate with Great Britain in the settlement of the Syrian Question, and by his abandonment of the Treaty of Unkiar Skelessi when the Convention of the Straits was drawn up in 1842. He probably thought that the combination of Russian military strength and British naval power would be sufficiently formidable to induce other powers to accept a settlement backed so strongly. It is at least arguable that British ministers were unwise to reject his overtures outright. The Turks deserved no consideration, and an agreement might have been reached between Great Britain and Russia which would have rendered the Crimean War and the Russo-Turkish War of 1877 unnecessary. Russia and Great Britain might have become firm allies, and Russian predominance in the Balkans need not have been prejudicial to British interests. Moreover, it may be observed that the state of affairs in the East half a century later bore a striking similarity to the solution suggested by the Tsar.

Disputes in Palestine between the clergy of the Roman Catholic Church and those of the Greek Orthodox Church were the subject of much of the diplomatic activity which preceded the Crimean War. The points at issue were petty. The Holy Places (the Churches of the Nativity at Bethlehem and of the Holy Sepulchre at Jerusalem) were used by both groups of clergy; each side claimed the right to the "custody" of the Holy Places, so that the other group might enter only as a favour, if at all. The "custody" had been assigned to the Roman Catholic clergy by a treaty in the early part of the eighteenth century, but it had been neglected by them, and the Greek clergy had assumed it. Louis Napoleon Bonaparte, who was now Emperor of the French as Napoleon III, wished to strengthen his position in France by pursuing a vigorous foreign policy, and the quarrel over the Holy Places afforded him an opportunity. Through his ambassador at Constantinople he demanded for the Latin clergy the custody of the Holy Places, and, in particular, a key to the great door of the Church of the Nativity.

Nicholas I sent an embassy under Prince Menshikoff to Constantinople to oppose the French demand. Menshikoff also put forward a claim for recognition of the Tsar as the protector of all Christians of the Orthodox Church in the Sultan's dominions—a much more sweeping claim than that conceded by the Treaty of Kutchuk Kainardji, and one which, if granted, would have reduced the Ottoman Empire to a state of vassalage to Russia. The terrified Sultan turned to the British ambassador, Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, for advice. Lord Stratford was personally antagonistic to Nicholas, who in 1832 had declined to receive him as British ambassador at St. Petersburg. He was a man of great capacity who was in full sympathy with the Palmerstonian tradition in foreign policy. On the question of the Holy Places he advised the Sultan to agree to a compromise which virtually conceded the demands of the French; on the wider claim put forward by Menshikoff he counselled rejection, and he either promised or implied that British help would be given to Turkey in the event of war. Menshikoff left Constantinople, and preparations were made for war.

The question of the Holy Places has been dealt with at some length in order that its significance may be realised. It was important merely because it brought out the personal antagonism of the two Emperors. Nicholas, descendant of a long line of Romanoffs, viewed Napoleon as an upstart, and declined to recognise him in traditional diplomatic style; Napoleon III wished to avenge the disaster of 1812 by humbling the Tsar.

In July, 1853, Russian troops crossed the Pruth and occupied Moldavia and Wallachia (modern Roumania), and British and French fleets proceeded to Turkish waters. Representatives of Great Britain, France, Austria, and Prussia met at Vienna to attempt to settle the questions at issue by negotiation. The Vienna note, presented to the Tsar and the Sultan, suggested a formula which would recognise the Russian right of protection of Greek Christians and would at the same time safeguard Turkish independence. Nicholas agreed to it, but the Sultan insisted upon amendments which made it unacceptable to the Tsar. The effort therefore failed, and a further attempt by the powers met with no greater success. The Turks thereupon demanded the evacuation of the Danubian principalities, and treated the Russian refusal as a declaration of war.

Turkish forces under the command of Omar Pasha offered a vigorous and successful resistance to the Russian advance on

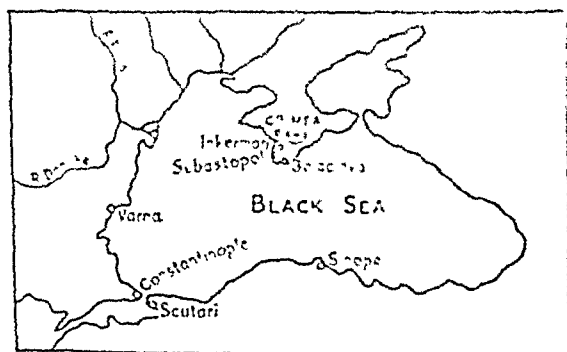
land. At sea the Russians were more successful. In November, 1853, a Russian fleet left Sebastopol, in the Crimea, and off Sinope it encountered and destroyed a Turkish squadron of eleven ships. The British and French fleets thereupon passed through the Dardanelles and, in January, 1854, entered the Black Sea. Great Britain and France were not yet at war with Russia, but they invited the Tsar to withdraw his ships to Sebastopol. He did so, but at the same time he declared war.

Vigorous fighting in the Danubian principalities in the spring of 1854 resulted in further defeats for the Russians, and when an Austrian army was assembled on the frontier and an allied army was landed at Varna to reinforce the Turks the Russian position became untenable. The principalities were evacuated by the Russians a year after they had been entered, and they were now occupied by the Austrians on behalf of Turkey.

The object of the war, the expulsion of the Russians from Turkish territory, was thus attained. But Napoleon III, desirous of strengthening his throne by achieving military successes, and eager, by humiliating Russia, to obliterate the memory of 1812, determined to keep on. Great Britain, too, wished to weaken Russia to such an extent that she would no longer be a menace to Turkey. The allies decided, therefore, to seize and destroy Sebastopol and to capture or sink the Russian fleet.

The Crimean expedition was badly planned. It was not begun until the autumn of 1854, and it was undertaken with insufficient equipment and supplies. The British army was commanded by Lord Raglan, the French by Marshal Saint-Arnaud. A landing was made without opposition at Eupatoria, near the mouth of the Alma, and a week later the allies defeated Menshikoff at the Battle of the Alma, with heavy losses on both sides. At this stage an immediate attack from the north on Sebastopol might have succeeded, as the fortifications were incomplete. But Raglan's advice to attack was overruled by Saint-Arnaud; the defences of the fortress were strengthened, and the siege was formed. The British army drew its supplies from Balaclava Bay, and Menshikoff attacked with a view to cutting it off. The Battle of Balaclava, and that of Inkerman which followed, were hard, hand-to-hand fights, remarkable for the bravery of the troops, the incapacity of their leaders, and the heaviness of the casualty lists;

The siege of Sebastopol continued during the winter, and the soldiers suffered terribly from sickness, cold, and lack of supplies. A storm in the Black Sea involved the loss of some supply ships; absence of roads hindered the transport of necessities from the coast to the entrenchments; rations were inadequate; there was no winter clothing for the troops; such supplies as were obtainable were often of unsatisfactory quality through the delinquency of army contractors. Hospitals were filled to overflowing with men suffering from scurvy, cholera, and fever, as well as from wounds, and through lack of medical and surgical supplies and skilled attention the mortality was



THE CRIMEAN WAR, 1854-6

very great. The privations of the men were made known to the British people through the publication of William Russell's dispatches to *The Times*, and public indignation was reflected in the House of Commons.

Roebuck, a member of the House, moved a resolution for the appointment of a committee to inquire into the condition of the army before Sebastopol. This was equivalent to a motion of censure on the Aberdeen ministry, and it was carried by a large majority. Aberdeen immediately resigned.

With some reluctance the Queen invited Lord Palmerston to form an administration, no other leading statesman of the time being able or willing to do so. Under Palmerston's direction conditions in the Crimea improved. Reinforcements and supplies were sent out and an adequate nursing service was

organised at the base hospital at Scutari under the direction of Florence Nightingale.

Nicholas I died in March, 1855, and was succeeded by his son, Alexander II. Negotiations for peace were opened, but no agreement was reached, and the war continued. Pélissier, who had succeeded Saint-Arnaud as commander of the French army, organised a successful attack on the Malakoff, a fort whose possession by the French made Sebastopol untenable by the Russians. Gortchakoff, now in command of the Russians, sank his ships and withdrew from the fortress, of which the allies took possession.

By this time all parties were weary of the war. The Russians had suffered very heavy losses. Napoleon was anxious for peace, and was with some difficulty dissuaded from negotiating behind the back of Great Britain. The Austrian Government proposed terms as a basis of discussion, and a conference was arranged to meet at Paris.

By the Treaty of Paris, 1856, it was agreed that conquests made during the war should be restored, but the Russians undertook not to refortify Sebastopol. The Dardanelles were to be closed to the warships, and open to the trading vessels, of all nations, and neither Russia nor Turkey was to keep a fleet in the Black Sea. Serbia, Moldavia, and Wallachia were made practically independent of Turkey (ten years later Moldavia and Wallachia united to form the kingdom of Roumania). The powers renounced, individually and collectively, all claim to interfere in the internal affairs of Turkey, so that the Russian right of protection of Orthodox Christians under the Treaty of Kutchuk Kainardji was abandoned.

As a solution of the Eastern Question the Treaty of Paris was in every way insufficient and unsatisfactory. By the declaration



THE BALKANS—AFTER THE TREATY OF PARIS, 1856

of the powers that they would refrain from further intervention in Turkish affairs the Christian peoples which remained in the Ottoman Empire were made to understand that they could not look to Europe for aid against oppression in the future. Yet it should have been obvious that a renewal of Turkish atrocities (such as occurred in Bulgaria twenty years later) would rouse public opinion throughout Europe in such a way that the powers would be compelled to intervene. Nor did Russia cease to be a factor in the Balkan problem. She had suffered some loss of prestige, and her military strength had been shown to be overrated, but she was not permanently weakened. The collapse of the Ottoman Empire was postponed, but Turkey was neither strengthened nor regenerated, and in course of time her misrule in the Balkans called again for European action.

CHAPTER XV

PALMERSTON AS PRIME MINISTER

PALMERSTON was out of office for only a year after his resignation of the Foreign Secretaryship in 1851. His inclusion in the Aberdeen ministry of 1852-5 was essential; without him it would have been fatally weakened. But, in view of his past attitude to the court, it was hardly possible for him to be placed again in charge of the Foreign Office. He became Home Secretary, but he remained interested in foreign affairs, and he supported Lord John Russell, the Foreign Secretary, in pressing the cabinet to take a strong line against Russia. When the Crimean scandals brought about the fall of the Aberdeen Government the Queen had recourse, in turn, to Lord Derby and Lord John Russell. Neither of these was able to form a ministry, and, no doubt with reluctance, she sent for Palmerston. He was the one man who was able to secure and retain public confidence, and he had no difficulty in forming a cabinet.

Palmerston was now seventy-one years of age, and, except for a period of fifteen months in 1858-9, he retained the premier-ship until his death. He remained as vigorous, as overbearing, as flippant, and as contemptuous of decorum as in past years, and though the Queen and the Prince Consort never fully overcame their distrust of him he retained (except for one short period) the confidence of the people.

In its original form the first Palmerston ministry was, in the main, a continuation of that of Aberdeen, but when Palmerston decided to go on with the appointment of the Roebuck committee (instead of asking the House of Commons to drop the inquiry, as he might have done) the Peelite group resigned. The ministry was probably the stronger for the secession of its lukewarm members. The Crimean War was carried on with vigour, and Palmerston received credit for the conclusion of a victorious peace in 1856.

The Persia War of 1856 might be regarded as an aftermath of the Crimean War. As the result of Russian intrigues the Shah of Persia attacked Herat, in Afghanistan, and Lord

Canning, the Governor-General of India, decided to take action against him. Sir James Outram led an expedition against the Persians and defeated them. By the treaty of peace, which was signed at Paris in 1857, the Shah agreed to withdraw from Afghanistan and to accept British advice in his dealings with Russia.

A dispute with China led to the outbreak of the second China War. (An earlier war, in 1840-2, had resulted in the cession of Hong-Kong to Great Britain and the opening of five ports, including Canton and Shanghai, to foreign trade.) In October, 1856, the *Arrow*, a vessel at Canton, had been seized by Chinese officials, and members of her crew had been arrested for piracy. The *Arrow* had formerly been of British registry (at Hong-Kong), but it appeared that her registration had expired in September, 1856, and though at the time of her capture she was flying the British flag she had no right to do so. It seems difficult to understand the grounds of British protest; nevertheless, Palmerston contended that the action of the Chinese amounted to an infringement of British rights, and the surrender of the ship and her crew was demanded. The Chinese refusal was followed by fighting at Canton. The crew of the *Arrow* were surrendered to the British, but hostilities continued, and Canton was bombarded.

These events were the subject of controversy in Great Britain, and early in 1857 Richard Cobden in the House of Commons moved a vote of censure on the Government in connection with events in China. Palmerston was beaten by sixteen votes, and, instead of resigning, he resolved to appeal to the country. The electors responded to his appeal to maintain the honour of the flag in distant lands, and in the newly elected House he was supported by a majority of seventy.

The outstanding event of the year 1857 was the Indian Mutiny, which is described elsewhere in this book. Forces intended for operations against the Chinese were diverted to India, and it was not till the end of 1857 that the China War was resumed. Canton was again bombarded, and was captured and sacked, and the Taku forts, at the mouth of the Pei-ho River, were seized. The refusal of the Chinese to come to terms was followed by an advance towards Peking. The Chinese Government now yielded, and by the Treaty of Tientsin it was agreed that a British Resident should be received at Peking and British consuls at the treaty ports.

His victory at the general election of 1857 had shown how great was Palmerston's popularity. An event at the beginning of 1858 proved that not even Palmerston could defy the wishes and prejudices of the nation with impunity. In January, 1858, an unsuccessful attempt on the life of the Emperor Napoleon III was made by a band of conspirators led by an Italian named Orsini, who was captured and executed. Great indignation was felt in France when it became known that the plot had been hatched in London and the bombs had been made in Birmingham. Some French officers petitioned the Emperor to lead them in war against Great Britain, and the French Foreign Minister addressed a peremptory demand to the British Government to strengthen its law against conspiracy. Palmerston, who was desirous of remaining on good terms with Napoleon, introduced in the House of Commons the Conspiracy to Murder Bill, by which such conspiracy was to be made punishable with penal servitude for life. The Bill itself was unexceptionable, but the attitude of the French Government and people had aroused very strong feeling in Great Britain. The idea that Palmerston was "truckling to France" made any discussion of the Bill upon its merits impossible, and it was defeated on second reading. Palmerston resigned.

From February, 1858, to June, 1859, the Conservatives under the Earl of Derby held office without a majority in the House of Commons. The record of this ministry is described elsewhere. A general election in 1859 failed to provide it with a majority, and it resigned.

Palmerston returned to office with a cabinet which included Peelites as well as Whigs. Lord John Russell (Earl Russell after 1861) was Foreign Secretary and Gladstone was Chancellor of the Exchequer. The fusion of Peelites and Whigs into a single Liberal party was approaching completion, though while Palmerston lived the eagerness of the Peelites for social and political reform was kept in check by the *laissez-faire* attitude of the Whigs. In home affairs, therefore, the second Palmerston ministry was a time of quiescence, though the finance of the period presented some features of interest.

The income-tax, which had been introduced by Peel in 1842, at sevenpence in the pound, remained at that figure until 1854, when on account of the Crimean War it was doubled. A further twopence was added in 1855, and the tax remained unchanged in 1856, but it was reduced to sevenpence in 1857

and to fivepence in 1858. Expenditure on national defence caused it to be raised to ninepence in 1859, and the free trade budget of 1860 brought it up to tenpence. Gladstone disliked the tax, viewing it as an impost on energy and enterprise, and he looked forward to its abolition. He was able to take a penny off in 1861, twopence in 1863, a penny in 1864, and twopence in 1865, when the tax stood at only fourpence.

In 1860, the policy of free trade, which had been inaugurated by Peel in 1842, was brought practically to completion. Richard Cobden, with the reluctant consent of Palmerston and the cordial approval of Gladstone, negotiated a commercial treaty with France by which French duties on many articles of British production were reduced. In the budget of the year Gladstone removed the duties on all remaining articles classed as manufactured goods. Customs were retained on only forty-eight articles, and these remaining duties were not of a protective character.

A bill to repeal the duty on paper, after being passed by the House of Commons, was rejected by the House of Lords. On the constitutional question thus raised the Commons registered a protest, on the motion of Palmerston (who, however, was not really in sympathy with Gladstone on the matter). This action of the Lords was the immediate cause of an important change in financial procedure in 1861. It had been the custom for the Government to deal with various financial matters in separate bills. In 1861 Gladstone incorporated the whole of the financial proposals for the year (including the abolition of the paper duty) in a single Finance Bill, which the Lords did not venture to reject, and the precedent thus established became the normal practice for the future.

In 1861 Robert Lowe, the Minister for Education, introduced his revised code, by which grants were to be made in support of public elementary schools, subject to children reaching a certain standard of proficiency in the elementary subjects of instruction. The system of "payment by results" was criticised then and throughout the period of its existence, but it probably promoted the efficiency of the schools.

But the attention of the second Palmerston ministry was engaged mainly in foreign affairs. Events in China called for further action. The Treaty of Tientsin had not been ratified by the Chinese Government, and fighting was renewed in 1859. A British naval attack on the Taku forts (which had been

restored to the Chinese after the Treaty of Tientsin) was repulsed. A stronger force attacked and captured the forts in 1860 and advanced to the neighbourhood of Peking. The Chinese then agreed to the British demands, but they treacherously seized some British officers and put them to death. The expeditionary force thereupon destroyed the Emperor's summer palace and reduced the Chinese to submission. By the Treaty of Peking the Emperor agreed to receive a British minister at Peking, to open more ports to foreign trade, to allow foreign shipping on the Yang-tse, to permit Christian missions, to permit the collection of Chinese customs by foreign officials, and to pay an indemnity.

Relations with France continued to be strained, and Palmerston, who was formerly well disposed towards Napoleon III, now viewed his actions with distrust. It was for some time feared that the French were contemplating an attack upon Great Britain. Vigorous defence measures were undertaken; the fortifications of naval ports were strengthened, and a Volunteer force was raised. But Napoleon's attention was engaged by the Italian War of Liberation. His annexation of Savoy and Nice did nothing to establish good relations with Great Britain, where his action was disliked. The Cobden treaty of 1860 was accepted by Palmerston less on account of its merits than because it tended to reduce Anglo-French animosity and to lessen the prospect of war.

Great Britain took no direct part in the Italian War of Liberation. Palmerston and Russell were in sympathy with the Italian cause, and they were instrumental in securing the adhesion of the central duchies to Sardinia by suggesting the holding of plebiscites. When Garibaldi went to Sicily Russell expressed approval in the House of Commons; he declined a French proposal that joint action should be taken to prevent Garibaldi's crossing to Naples; and to the Austrian Government he expressed hopes for the success of Victor Emmanuel against the Papal States.

In the Schleswig War, which occurred in 1864, the provinces of Schleswig and Holstein were seized by Prussia and Austria acting jointly against Denmark. It is unnecessary to indicate here the grounds of their action; it is sufficient to remark that British public opinion condemned German aggression. Before the outbreak of the war Russell had used expressions which gave rise to the belief that Great Britain would assist Denmark.

but when the attack was made she remained neutral. It is probable that Russell, in speaking so freely, was expecting the support of France, which Napoleon was unwilling to give. Moreover, though it is possible that Palmerston might have supported Russell even to the extent of sanctioning intervention in the war, the Queen took a strong line to the contrary; she insisted upon the excision from the speech at the opening of Parliament in 1864 of certain phrases which implied the possibility of British participation in the forthcoming war; and she even threatened to dissolve Parliament and let the nation decide on this matter between her and her ministers. (In such an event, Palmerston and Russell were by no means assured of the whole-hearted support of their colleagues.) It is commonly held that Palmerston and Russell were outwitted by Bismarck—that he “called their bluff.” In fairness to them it should be recognised that they were not altogether free agents, unless, indeed, they were prepared to provoke a conflict which would have brought the monarchy into the arena of party politics and might have seriously weakened it. The real ground of criticism of Russell is his use of threatening language without first making sure of his ability to convert his threats into acts. The Queen’s action may be variously interpreted as inspired by a love of peace, by distrust of her ministers, or by a liking for Germany.

During the American Civil War of 1861-5 the sympathies of the people of Great Britain were divided. The landed gentry of Great Britain felt little sympathy with the north, which was commercial, industrial, and democratic, and much for the men of their own class in the rebel southern states. The working classes of Great Britain were strongly on the side of the north on the question of slavery, which was one (though not the only one) of the issues of the war. It followed that the Governments of the two countries were rather less in sympathy than the peoples. The British Government maintained an attitude of neutrality, although it recognised the southern states as belligerents. (This meant that in the opinion of the British Government the southerners were entitled to fight, and that in the event of southern troops being captured by the United States army they were entitled to treatment as prisoners of war and not as rebels.) The north resented this recognition, and the British Government did not venture to recognise the independence of the southern states, or to offer its mediation in the struggle, both of which courses were at one time under consideration.

The *Trent* incident brought the United States and Great Britain perilously near to war. The *Trent* was a British ship which was carrying two southern envoys, Slidell and Mason, to Europe; it was stopped on the high seas by a federal warship, and the envoys were taken prisoners. Feeling in Great Britain ran high, and troops were sent to Canada. Palmerston and Russell prepared a strong protest, the rejection of which by the United States must have involved the two countries in war, while it could not have been accepted by the Americans without humiliation. The Prince Consort advised the modification of the dispatch, suggesting that the incident might be passed over if the United States would disavow the action of the captain of the warship and release the men. President Lincoln was unwilling to do this, but friendly representations were made to him by other European powers, and when he realised that the opinion of the whole civilised world was against him he released the prisoners.

The north had genuine ground of complaint against Great Britain in connection with the *Alabama*, a warship which was built on the Mersey for the southern states. It was the duty of the British Government, as a neutral, to prevent the departure of the *Alabama* until after the war. The matter was brought to Russell's notice in June, 1862, but delays occurred, and when the order for the detention of the vessel reached Birkenhead it was too late. She had left port, and did a great deal of damage to northern shipping before she was sunk. Russell refused to consider an American claim for compensation, but the matter was persisted in, and was the subject of arbitration proceedings some years later.

The Lancashire cotton industry suffered a serious set-back during the American Civil War. The blockade of southern ports by the federal navy cut off from Lancashire its supplies of raw materials. Mills were closed down, and thousands of operatives were thrown out of employment. It is much to their credit that, understanding the importance and the magnitude of the issues involved in the American struggle, they bore their hardships with courage and with an entire absence of disorder.

A general election in the summer of 1865 resulted in favour of the Government, whose majority was slightly increased. This was a personal triumph for Palmerston. Popular confidence in him remained unabated, but his days were numbered. In October of that year, at the age of eighty-one, he died.

CHAPTER XVI

THE FIRST GLADSTONE MINISTRY

BEFORE the history of his first ministry is considered, the chief events in the early life and career of William Ewart Gladstone may be briefly narrated. Son of a Liverpool merchant, he was educated at Eton and Christ Church College, Oxford, and he devoted himself to a political career. He became Tory member for Newark in the first reformed Parliament, and attracted some attention by his attitude on the question of the abolition of slavery. He advocated gradual emancipation of the negroes, and called for the establishment of a scheme for their religious education. In the first Peel ministry he was Under-Secretary for the Colonies, and when Peel assumed office in 1841 Gladstone was given the post of Vice-President of the Board of Trade. He was promoted to the Presidency in 1843, but conscientious scruples in regard to Peel's proposal to make a grant to Maynooth College led to his resignation early in 1845. Later in that year he resumed office, this time as Secretary of State for War and the Colonies, and he supported his chief without hesitation in the struggle for the repeal of the Corn Laws, although for some weeks at this time he was without a seat in Parliament.

During the next twenty years Gladstone was recognised as one of the leading men in the Peelite group, and he gained a great reputation for his mastery of the principles of national finance. In Lord Aberdeen's coalition ministry of 1852-5 Gladstone was Chancellor of the Exchequer, and he proved himself to be a worthy disciple of Peel. In his budget of 1853 he carried the free trade work of his former leader a stage farther by abolishing the duties on about a hundred and twenty articles and reducing those on another one hundred and thirty-four. He disliked the income-tax, and he kept in mind Peel's original conception of it as a temporary impost. He brought forward a scheme for its reduction and ultimate extinction, and in its place he proposed to raise money by an extension of the legacy duty.

When Palmerston succeeded Aberdeen in 1855, Gladstone was invited to continue in office, but the action of the Prime Minister in sanctioning the appointment of a committee of inquiry into the conduct of the Crimean War was distasteful to the Peelites, and they resigned. In 1859, however, when Palmerston became Prime Minister for the second time, Gladstone was reappointed Chancellor of the Exchequer. His tenure of the office was characterised by a series of brilliant budgets, by which he completed the establishment of free trade. His eagerness for political and social reform was kept in check by Palmerston, but on the latter's death Gladstone, now Leader of the House of Commons in the Russell ministry, introduced a parliamentary Reform Bill which aroused the apprehensions of the Whig section of the supporters of the Government. The Bill was defeated, and the fall of the ministry was followed by two years of Conservative rule.

Disraeli, as Leader of the House of Commons in 1867, proposed a Reform Bill which was in substance that of his rival. Since Disraeli could not command an independent majority in the Commons he was forced to agree to the amendments which Gladstone, now leader of the opposition, put forth. Credit for the passing of the Act, therefore, was attributed by the newly enfranchised electors to Gladstone as much as to Disraeli. In the general election of 1868 the Liberals (the party into which Whigs and Peelites were now finally merged) obtained a majority of one hundred and twenty, and Gladstone, who had already passed thirty-five years in political life, became Prime Minister.

Gladstone, a man of outstanding rectitude of character and of deep religious convictions, a profound scholar, a great financier and economist, and one of the greatest parliamentary orators of modern times, felt that his hour had come. The power which had been granted him by the people should be used in their service. Abuses should be remedied, privileges curtailed, reforms, some of them long overdue, promoted. //

Ireland first demanded his attention. Three-quarters of the Irish people were Roman Catholic; of the remainder some were Presbyterian, and it is probable that the Church of Ireland included no more than one-eighth of the people of Ireland among its adherents. Its connection with Rome had been severed in Tudor times—yet it still retained the endowments which it had enjoyed from time immemorial. These endowments included

the right to tithe, which was paid directly by Irish landowners and indirectly by their tenants, most of whom were Roman Catholic.

Earlier in 1868, while Disraeli was still in office, Gladstone had declared himself in favour of the disestablishment and disendowment of the Irish Church, and in March, 1869, he introduced a bill for this purpose. It was fiercely opposed, especially in the House of Lords, and for a time it seemed likely that a grave constitutional crisis would develop. The Queen advised the bishops and the opposition peers to act with moderation and to avoid rejection of the Bill (which she personally disliked), and with some amendments it was carried. The Church of Ireland ceased to be the state Church, and its archbishops and bishops ceased to sit in the House of Lords, but it retained possession of all cathedrals, churches, and parsonages. Its property, valued at sixteen million pounds, passed to the state, but a part of it, of the capital value of nearly ten millions, was returned to the Church. The life interests of the existing clergy were preserved. At the same time the Maynooth grant and the *regium donum* (an annual grant to the Presbyterians of Ulster) were discontinued, in each case compensation being paid out of the forfeited funds of the disestablished Church.

It would not be true to say that Irish religious animosity died away as the result of the measure; bitter feelings which had existed for generations could not readily be extinguished. But, at least, the Irish grievance in being compelled to support a church which was not that of the mass of the people disappeared. The effect of the Act upon the Church of Ireland has been variously estimated; it is probably true to say that it has been beneficial. Freed from the state connection, it has been able to do its work among its own adherents with greater effect, and, within its more limited sphere, to extend its usefulness.

The agrarian problem in Ireland offered an even more serious cause of discontent. Much Irish land was owned by great landlords, many of whom were resident in Great Britain and were represented in Ireland by agents who rack-rented the peasantry. Irish peasants were forced to gain a livelihood by cultivating the soil, since there was no alternative occupation to which they could turn. (There were in Ireland no great manufacturing towns which could absorb surplus labour not required on the land, as was the case in Great Britain.) Exces-

sive rents were charged for small holdings of land, the barest margin of subsistence being left to the cultivator. If the Irish farmer worked hard and improved his holding by the erection of buildings, fences, and gates, or by the draining and manuring of the land, he might find that his rent was raised against him, so that the benefit of the improvement passed to the landlord. The failure of a tenant to pay his rent might be followed by eviction; the improvements which had been made remained the property of the landlord, and no compensation was paid to the tenant in respect of them. Under such a system it was inevitable that the peasantry should remain in a condition of extreme poverty. In Ulster things were not quite so bad, since, by custom, an outgoing tenant was entitled to compensation from his successor for the improvements he had made.

✓ In 1870 the First Irish Land Act was passed. Its provisions were based on the Ulster custom, which was made legally binding and was extended throughout Ireland. Tenants who were evicted by their landlord for any other reason than non-payment of rent were to be compensated for disturbance and for any improvements they had made, and a plan was evolved by which the Government might lend money to tenants who wished to buy their farms. The interest of a tenant in his holding was thus recognised by law, but the Act did no more than touch the fringe of the problem. Evictions were still possible, and rack-renting went on unabated, while the provisions of the Act relating to the purchase of farms were almost valueless, since landlords were not compelled to sell.

The outstanding measure of the year 1870 was the Elementary Education Act. The condition of elementary education in Great Britain was far from satisfactory. Schools provided by the National Society and the British Society existed in most towns and large villages; since 1833 these societies had been assisted in their work of building schools by the receipt of Government grants, and since 1861 the schools had received grants to aid in their maintenance, which for the rest was dependent upon fees and upon the subscriptions of persons philanthropically inclined. But the standard of education in the schools was deplorably low, and only about half the children of school age were in attendance. The enfranchisement of the working classes in towns by the Reform Act of 1867 had convinced politicians that "we must educate our masters," since if the new voters remained illiterate they would be unfit to pass

judgment on political affairs. Forster's Elementary Education Act made education neither compulsory nor free. Its aim was the provision of sufficient school accommodation for all children between the ages of five and thirteen. The country was to be divided into school districts; the existing voluntary schools were to be retained, and in those districts in which accommodation was insufficient School Boards, elected by the ratepayers, were to be set up and were to be charged with the duty of building and maintaining schools, money for the purpose being provided from the poor rate. Much controversy was aroused by the provisions for religious instruction, and it was at length enacted (rather than agreed) that teaching distinctive of the denomination which provided the school might be given in voluntary schools, but that in the "Board" schools religious instruction was to be undenominational in character. The right of parents to withdraw their children from religious instruction was recognised by the insertion of a conscience clause.

In 1871 the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge were thrown open to Nonconformists. Hitherto, a student, before receiving a degree, was required to declare his assent to the Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England. This requirement was now abandoned, and, although these universities continued to be associated with the Church of England, no religious test was henceforth to be imposed as a condition of taking a degree or receiving appointment to office (except to certain clerical offices).

① The law relating to trade unions had been in an unsatisfactory state for many years. In the first quarter of the nineteenth century trade unionism had been illegal. In 1824 workmen were permitted to combine in bargaining with employers about hours of work and rates of wages, but for no other purpose. In fact, during the next forty years many other aspects of trade union activity were developed, although the limits imposed in 1824 had never been removed. The strength of the unions caused some alarm, and in 1867 a Royal Commission investigated the charges brought against them by their opponents and the grievances which were alleged by their supporters. The latter complained, in particular, that since the Act of 1824 did not specifically permit trade unions to hold property or funds it was impossible to prosecute officials who embezzled their money; recognition of the right of the unions to exist was demanded, and protection was claimed for their funds. An

act was passed in 1869 to afford protection in regard to the funds, trade unions being placed in this respect on a level with friendly societies, and in 1871 the larger problem was dealt with by the passing of an act which fully legalised the unions. This measure, removing as it did a grievance of long standing, would have received the approbation of the working classes had it not been accompanied by a Criminal Law Amendment Act which forbade picketing as an accompaniment of strikes. Since a strike would lose much of its effectiveness without picketing, the workmen felt that Parliament was taking away with one hand what it was conceding with the other, and the Government by its method of dealing with the question gained the approval of neither employers nor employed.

The Prussian army, reorganised by Bismarck and Von Moltke, had fought three successful wars on the continent in seven years, and public attention was directed to the inadequacy of the British army. Mr. Cardwell, Secretary of State for War, introduced a number of army reforms, of which, perhaps, the most important was the establishment of the short service system. Under the existing system a young man who embarked upon a military career enlisted for twenty-one years. At the end of his period of service he was too old to learn a trade, and he was given a pension. Under the new regulations a man was accepted for a short period—in any case not more than twelve years—and he was to serve for only part of this period with the colours. He was then to be transferred to the reserve, liable to be recalled in the event of war. Such a man when he left the army would still be young enough to take his part in civil life. It was hoped that by these measures a more ample flow of recruits would be secured and that a large and efficient army would be instantly available in times of crisis.

As a means of promoting the professional efficiency of army officers the Government resolved upon the abolition of the system of purchasing commissions. A bill was introduced with this object; the system was to be discontinued, and the existing holders of commissions were to be compensated. But the upper classes warmly resented the abolition of a system by which they monopolised the superior posts in the army, and the House of Lords, while not directly rejecting the Bill, resolved to postpone its consideration. Gladstone and his colleagues thereupon resolved to attain their object in another way. The practice of purchasing commissions rested upon the

sanction of a royal warrant, and ministers advised the Queen to issue a new warrant which would cancel that of George III, and so terminate the system. This action was of course criticised by their political opponents, but the House of Lords was compelled to pass the Bill in order that existing officers should receive compensation.

The principal legislative achievement of the year 1872 was the Ballot Act, which established the practice of secret voting, and by consequence did much to reduce corruption, at elections. Bribery and intimidation were illegal; when it became impossible to ascertain how a vote had been cast they ceased to be worth while. A Licensing Act which was passed in the same year provided for the closing of public houses by midnight in London and by eleven o'clock elsewhere.

Gladstone turned to Ireland again in 1873, when he introduced an Irish University Bill. It provided for the establishment of an Irish University to which various existing institutions of university rank should be affiliated. The new university was to be unsectarian; no religious tests were to be imposed, and fellowships and professorships were to be open to Roman Catholics and Protestants alike. The teaching of theology, history, and mental and moral philosophy was to be forbidden, and the expression by any professor of views which might give offence to the religious convictions of any member of the university was to be followed by his removal from his post. It was hoped that men of different religious views would be able to associate in harmony, but such a travesty of the normal conception of a university pleased nobody, in England or in Ireland. The Bill was rejected by the House of Commons.

The other important measure of 1873 was more successful. By the Supreme Court of Judicature Act the law courts were reorganised. A single court was set up, divided into a High Court of Justice and a Court of Appeal. The former comprised several divisions corresponding to the former separate Courts of Queen's Bench, Exchequer, Common Pleas, Chancery, Probate, Divorce, and Admiralty. The advantage of the change was twofold. Judges were appointed to the court as a whole, and could be transferred from one division to another in accordance with the requirements of public business. Further, whereas formerly the common law courts dealt only with law and the Court of Chancery with equity, henceforth all divisions could take notice of both law and equity.

The foreign policy of the first Gladstone ministry was pacific and conciliatory. It endeavoured to avert the outbreak of war between France and Prussia in 1870; it can hardly be blamed for its failure, in view of the foolish conduct of French statesmen at a critical time and of the determination of Bismarck to force on a conflict. Great Britain remained neutral during the war, and she secured from both contestants a promise to respect Belgian neutrality. Russia at this time announced that she would no longer regard herself as bound by that clause in the Treaty of Paris, 1856, by which she had been forbidden to maintain a fleet in the Black Sea. The prohibition had been imposed upon her by Great Britain and France, the victorious powers in the Crimean War, and could be enforced only by them. France was now in no condition to engage Russia; Great Britain must do so alone, or must consent to a modification of the treaty. War seemed possible, but Gladstone was unwilling to go to this length. A protest was sent to Russia, but the inevitable was accepted, and Russia began to build a fleet in the Black Sea. It is difficult to suggest what further action, short of war, could have been taken by Great Britain; nevertheless, the ministry suffered some loss of prestige and popularity over the affair.

It was even more unfortunate over the *Alabama* arbitration. The *Alabama* incident had occurred during the second Palmerston administration, and the task of meeting the claims of the United States was inherited by the Gladstone ministry. An arbitration treaty was concluded between Great Britain and the United States, and a tribunal was appointed to adjudicate on the question at Geneva. The Americans claimed £9,500,000 as direct damages, and put forward a suggestion that indirect and consequential damages amounted to four hundred millions. This, however, was withdrawn by them, and was ruled out by the tribunal. The amount awarded for direct damages was £3,250,000. In Great Britain it was felt that the country had not received fair treatment; what might have been a valuable precedent in the settlement of international disputes proved, for many years, to be a hindrance to the acceptance of the principle of arbitration. The Gladstone ministry suffered further loss of popularity over the affair.

The rejection of the Irish University Bill was followed by Gladstone's offer of his resignation to the Queen. Disraeli, however, refused to form yet another stop-gap ministry, and

Gladstone resumed office. But the ministry was fatally weakened. In spite of its achievements it had lost popularity and support. To judge by the number and variety of the reforms which it had put forward it should have received the gratitude and retained the support of large sections of the people. But the effect was almost the opposite. By most of these measures some group or other was offended or adversely affected, and several of his acts lost for Gladstone more votes than they gained. Churchmen disliked the disestablishment of the Irish Church and the opening of Oxford and Cambridge to Dissenters, who, in their turn, were dissatisfied with the provisions of the Elementary Education Act relating to religious instruction in schools. The upper classes disapproved of the abolition of the purchase of commissions and the legalisation of trade unions, while the working classes resented the state of the law with regard to picketing during strikes. It was generally felt that the foreign policy of the Government had been weak, though its critics would have been even more unsparing in their condemnation of wars with Russia over the Black Sea question and with America about the *Alabama* claims. Gladstone's financial policy had been markedly successful. Reforms cost money; yet the Prime Minister had insisted on rigid economy in public affairs and had reduced the income-tax to threepence in the pound, bringing it within sight of extinction. In the hope of attracting support Gladstone, in his election address, promised the abolition of the income-tax, but the Government's record offered to the Conservatives too many points of attack. In the general election, the first after the passing of the Ballot Act, the Liberals were decisively defeated, and, for the first time since 1841, a clear Conservative majority was secured. Gladstone immediately resigned.

CHAPTER XVII

DISRAELI

BENJAMIN DISRAELI, the son of Isaac D'Israeli, a Jewish man of letters, was born in 1804. In his youth he studied law, but he gained notice as the author of a series of political novels, and he determined to enter political life. (Though of Jewish race, he was a member of the Church of England and was eligible for membership of the House of Commons; had he been of the Jewish faith he would have been excluded.) In 1837, the year of Queen Victoria's accession, he entered Parliament as Conservative member for Maidstone.

He was disappointed at not being offered a position in Peel's administration of 1841-6, and in course of time he became its bitter critic. With some other Tory members he formed the Young England group, hostile to the Prime Minister, and intent upon promoting industrial and social reform while maintaining protection. For some years Disraeli failed to win the confidence of other members of his party, the eccentricity of his manner, the oddity of his personal appearance, and the excitability of his oratory telling against him. The splitting of the Conservative party on the free trade issue afforded him the opportunity he sought, and the secession of the Peelites from that party left him as one of the leaders of the orthodox remnant.

Disraeli was fated to pass the greater part of his political career in opposition, and he devoted his talents to the establishment of his influence within the party, reorganising it, restating its policy, and fitting it to rule the country. He was by no means prepared to suffer political martyrdom for a lost cause; regarding protection as dead, he induced his followers to accept free trade as the settled fiscal policy of the nation. He taught the Conservatives to trust the people in order that they might be trusted by the people. Conservatism was not to be the creed of wealth and birth alone; the nation was invited to see in "Tory democracy" a whole-hearted devotion of the party to social and constitutional progress. His foreign policy was in the Palmerstonian tradition of upholding British interests and

prestige; in the near East, where British interests and prestige seemed to be in some danger, he determined to maintain the integrity of Turkey in the face of the Russian menace. After a long period of national indifference to colonial affairs, during which the overseas possessions of the Crown were commonly regarded as burdens rather than as assets, he drew attention to their importance. He revived the interest of the nation in the British Empire, and he secured for the Conservative party the advantage to be gained by this change of view. The Conservatives came to be regarded as, or at least they claimed to be, the special guardians of Imperial interests, and they did not hesitate to stigmatise their political opponents as "little-Englanders."

Upon the fall of the Russell ministry early in 1852, a Conservative Government was formed with the Earl of Derby as Prime Minister and Disraeli as Chancellor of the Exchequer and Leader of the House of Commons. The Government was in a minority in the House of Commons—yet Disraeli's budget met with widespread approval, and was accepted. At a general election in the summer the Conservatives gained some seats, but not enough to yield them a majority. When the new Parliament met an attempt was made by the opposition to discredit the ministry by the moving of a resolution expressing approval of free trade. Disraeli defeated the attack by inducing his followers to accept the resolution, which, therefore, was carried by the votes of members of all parties. The Conservatives henceforth were not committed to the support of protection. But Whigs and Peelites acted together against Disraeli's second budget, which was defeated, and the Government resigned.

A second Derby-Disraeli ministry was formed in 1858, after the defeat of Palmerston on the Conspiracy to Murder Bill. This ministry, like the first, could not command a majority in the House of Commons, and its continuance for sixteen months was mainly due to the reluctance of different sections of the opposition to act together. Some measures of importance were passed during this period. The India Act of 1858 established the sovereignty of the Queen in India and abolished the East India Company. The disqualification of Jews for membership of the House of Commons was removed, and the property qualification of members was abolished. In 1859 a parliamentary Reform Bill was introduced in the Commons. The county franchise was to be reduced to the level of that

already existing in towns; the right of the forty-shilling freeholders in towns to vote in both town and country was to be discontinued; and certain "fancy franchises" were proposed. The main features of the Bill were warmly contested by radicals, who wanted a more democratic franchise, and by Whigs, who were opposed to any extension, while the fancy franchises were generally ridiculed. The Bill was defeated. Lord Derby, instead of resigning, appealed to the country. Though the Conservatives gained some seats they still failed to secure a parliamentary majority, and, upon being defeated in the new House, they resigned.

Upon the defeat of Gladstone's Reform Bill in 1866 the Earl of Derby for the third time became Prime Minister, with Disraeli as Chancellor of the Exchequer and Leader of a House of Commons which contained a hostile majority. Early in 1867 Disraeli brought forward proposals for parliamentary reform, which in the course of their passage through Parliament underwent amendment to such an extent that the Act which was passed differed very much from the Bill which was introduced. Many of the changes were accepted on the suggestion of Gladstone and the Liberals, who commanded a majority in the House of Commons; to have opposed these amendments would have imperilled the ministry. But their effect was to antagonise some members of the Conservative party, who were not prepared for such sweeping changes. The right to vote was conferred on all male householders in towns and on all who paid a rental of twelve pounds per annum in counties. Lodgers also, if they paid as much as ten pounds per annum for unfurnished rooms, were given votes. A further redistribution of seats took place; eleven small towns lost their separate representation, and thirty-five towns with less than 10,000 people were deprived of one member; the seats thus released were assigned to counties and large towns. For the first time in the history of parliamentary representation some large provincial towns received more than two members, a third member being given to Birmingham, Manchester, Leeds, and Liverpool. In order to arrange for a fair representation of the people of these places it was provided that though each of them was to have three members each elector was to have only two votes; it was assumed that at an election each party would nominate two candidates, and the outcome would be the election of two members of one party and one of the other, a result which would be more truly

representative of the town than the choice of three members of one party. (The device was found not to work well, and in the Reform Act of 1834 it was abandoned.) The Bill applied only to England, and in the following year measures, similar in principle but differing slightly in detail, were passed for Scotland and Ireland. In Scotland the county franchise was fixed at fourteen pounds rental per annum instead of twelve, and in the redistribution of seats Glasgow received a third member. In Ireland the borough franchise was limited to those who were rated at not less than four pounds per annum.

By the Reform Acts of 1867 and 1868 a further attempt was made to remove anomalies in parliamentary representation, but, as in 1832, no general scheme of equality in representation was introduced. The establishment of household franchise in towns shifted the centre of political power to the working classes; the artisans, hitherto without political power, now became the most numerous section of the electorate. (The labourers in country districts were still without the right to vote, but their enfranchisement at some date not too far distant was inevitable.) Disraeli was confident that the Act would be to the advantage of both the nation and the Conservative party; many of the Conservatives felt, with Lord Derby, that it was a "leap in the dark."

Another measure passed in 1867 was the British North America Act, which brought the Dominion of Canada into existence. This was no less important than the Reform Act, but it occupied much less of the time of the House of Commons, since it was regarded as non-contentious and met with the approval of both parties.

The Earl of Derby retired from political life early in 1868, and Disraeli, whose political reputation had been strengthened by his adroitness in the management of the debates on the Reform Bill, became Prime Minister. His tenure of the office was short. The conduct of the Fenians, in a series of outrages extending over some years, had drawn the attention of the House and the country to the condition of Ireland. The state of the Irish Church was discussed, and Gladstone proposed resolutions advocating its disestablishment. The resolutions were carried (the Government being defeated), and an appeal to the country became inevitable. The Scottish and Irish Reform Bills had not yet been carried, and it was agreed between the two parties that the dissolution should be postponed

perhaps, be made universal and compulsory. Such acts included the Artisans' Dwellings Act and a Friendly Societies Act, both passed in 1875. By the former, corporations of towns were enabled (not compelled) to acquire and demolish slum property and build cottages for working men; the latter encouraged (not compelled) friendly societies to submit their accounts to government audit.

The Public Worship Regulation Act, 1874, provoked a great deal of controversy. It was introduced in the House of Lords, and was not at first welcomed by Disraeli, who, however, veered round and piloted the Bill through the Commons. The purpose of the Act was the suppression of "ritualistic" practices in the Church of England, and it was defied by the clergy against whom it was aimed. During the next few years several priests were committed to prison for refusing to submit to dictation in matters of conscience. Men who had no sympathy with Anglo-Catholic ceremonial and teaching felt that the time was past when clergymen of irreproachable lives should be persecuted on account of their religious views, and the Act at length ceased to be enforced.

Some measures of greater usefulness were passed in the next few years. |The law relating to trade unions was amended by the Conspiracy and Protection of Property Act in 1875 in such a way as to legalise peaceful picketing, so that the right of workmen to strike and to make their strike effective was at last recognised. The practice of some shipowners of sending ships to sea in an unseaworthy condition was checked by the Merchant Shipping Acts of 1875 and 1876; deck cargoes were to be limited, and a load-line (popularly known as the Plimsoll line) was established. By an Elementary Education Act passed in 1876 the attendance of children at school was made compulsory. The Contagious Diseases (Animals) Act of 1878 was occasioned by the appearance and spread of such diseases as foot-and-mouth disease among cattle, liver-rot among sheep, and swine-fever among pigs; it enabled the Government to take measures for the suppression of disease and for improving the conditions under which farm stock was kept. The Factory and Workshops Act of 1878 was an important measure designed to codify the law relating to these establishments.

Disraeli's interest in imperial affairs was shown in several ways during his second ministry. In 1875 the Egyptian Khedive, Ismail, wished to sell his shares in the Suez Canal

Company, and Disraeli, without waiting for the sanction of Parliament, bought them on behalf of the British Government. The construction of the canal had aroused little interest in Great Britain, and Palmerston, Prime Minister at the time, had failed to appreciate its importance. Disraeli, on the other hand, recognised its value as a means of communication with India, and public opinion endorsed his action in securing for Great Britain a large interest in it. Gladstone expressed his fear that the transaction would prove unprofitable; in fact, the shares have increased in value to such an extent that the annual revenue received from them falls little short of the amount expended on their purchase.

In the winter of 1875-6 the Prince of Wales paid a visit to India and was received everywhere, by princes and people alike, with an outburst of loyal enthusiasm. The sovereignty of the Queen over India had been proclaimed in 1858; Disraeli thought that this sovereignty ought to be expressed in a formal title. An act was passed which conferred on the Queen the title of Empress of India, and the formal proclamation of the title took place in 1877. The Act was criticised by Disraeli's political opponents, but it has been of no small importance in securing the loyalty of Indian princes and people. It was to be expected that orientals would be more loyal to a personal sovereign than to the office of the Secretary of State for India—a point readily appreciated by Disraeli, who was himself of oriental descent.

Russian advance towards Afghanistan had for some years been causing concern to British statesmen, and the Ameer, Sheer Ali, was suspected of pro-Russian sympathies. His reluctance to receive a British Resident at Herat was one of the causes of the Afghan War, which broke out in 1878. The war is described elsewhere in this book. Its ultimate result was the enthronement of a friendly Ameer, Abdurrahman, and the control of his foreign policy.

Difficulties occurred in South Africa, also, during this period. The annexation of the Transvaal in 1877, and the Zulu War of 1879, are described in a later chapter. The problem of dealing with the desire of the Boers to recover their independence was inherited from Disraeli by Gladstone.

The Eastern Question, which had been settled for the time being by the Treaty of Paris, 1856, became acute again in 1875. In that year risings occurred in Bosnia and Herzegovina and

the unrest spread, in 1876, to Bulgaria. The Turks employed, in its suppression, bodies of irregular troops, known as Bashi-Bazouks, by whom terrible atrocities were committed, thousands of the Bulgars being massacred. Public opinion in Great Britain, and, indeed, throughout Europe, was deeply stirred. Gladstone made a series of speeches in which he called upon the Government to co-operate with other powers in expelling "the unspeakable Turk," "bag and baggage," from Europe. Disraeli, ever mindful of the Russian menace, was unwilling to weaken Turkey, and he tried to discredit the reports from the Balkans, stigmatising them as "coffee-house babble." In 1877, however, Russia made war upon Turkey and, after overcoming the stubborn resistance of the Turks at Plevna, advanced to Adrianople. To save his capital the Sultan accepted Russian terms in the Treaty of San Stefano, which provided for the establishment of a large independent Bulgar state extending from the Danube to the Aegean.

British ministers feared that the new Bulgarian state would be too much under the influence of Russia, and they demanded the revision of the treaty. Some preparations were made for war, but the Russian attitude was conciliatory, and it was agreed that a Congress of the powers should be held at Berlin to try to reach a solution of the problem. At the Congress Great Britain was represented by Disraeli and his Foreign Secretary, Lord Salisbury.

The decisions of the Congress were embodied in the Treaty of Berlin. The new state of Bulgaria was reduced in size; the part south of the Balkans, known as Eastern Roumelia, was to remain within the Turkish Empire but under a Christian governor, while the province of Macedonia was to continue under direct Turkish rule. The independence of Serbia, Montenegro, and Roumania was reaffirmed, and the Turkish provinces of Bosnia and Herzegovina were placed under Austrian rule. Great Britain received the island of Cyprus.

The arrangements made at Berlin in 1878 have been the subject of much criticism. When Disraeli and Salisbury returned home the Prime Minister declared that they had obtained "peace with honour." It is to be presumed that by this phrase he meant that British interests in the East had been maintained and that war with Russia had been averted. In the light of subsequent events the settlement cannot be regarded as a satisfactory solution of the problem. The treaty certainly reduced

the size of European Turkey and so removed several millions of people from Ottoman rule, but nothing was done for the inhabitants of the province of Macedonia, who had to endure a further period of oppression before gaining their freedom. The Russian design to advance through the Balkans, either directly over the ruins of Turkey or indirectly through vassal states carved out of Turkey, was checked, but the Russian efforts to expand merely changed their direction. Since 1878 attempts have been made to extend Russian influence in Asia—towards the Far East, in Manchuria, and towards the south, in Persia and Afghanistan. The antagonism of Great Britain and Russia over the Eastern Question was, in fact, diverted and continued over the Far Eastern Question.

Yet it is difficult to suggest any alternative policy which might have been followed by British ministers in 1878. The opportunity for co-operation with, instead of opposition to, Russia had occurred a generation earlier and had not been seized. Though the policy of expelling the Turks from Europe, as advocated by Gladstone, appealed to the feelings of the people, it was hardly consistent with the traditions of British statecraft in the nineteenth century. It may be doubted, moreover, whether it could have been effected without difficulty. The Turks were still fierce fighters, and though the joint efforts of the powers might, and probably would, have been sufficient to bring about the fall of Constantinople and the end of the Turkish Empire in Europe, the result would have been to the advantage of Russia and not of Great Britain.

His return from Berlin marks the pinnacle of Disraeli's popularity. From this time the Government began to lose ground. Criticism of its record at home and abroad was not lacking. Its attitude to the Bulgarian atrocities had been denounced by Gladstone, and the Berlin settlement was not received with universal acclamation. The Afghan and Zulu Wars afforded opportunity to the opposition to attack the Government. Failure to cope with the prevalent depression in agriculture disappointed the landed interest. A new and formidable technique of opposition in Parliament was devised by Parnell, the leader of the Irish party in the House of Commons. When the general election took place in 1880 the Liberals obtained a substantial majority, and the Prime Minister resigned.

Disraeli, who had become Earl of Beaconsfield in 1876, died

in 1881. He had long overcome the distrust with which he was viewed in his younger days, and he had become almost the idol of his party, of a large part of the nation, and of the Queen. Although at the moment of his death the Conservative party was in temporary eclipse he had succeeded in his aim of recasting its policy and so fitting it to rule the country. He had refused to permit his opponents to monopolise the epithet "democratic," while he had secured for his friends almost a monopoly of the term "imperialist." To a great extent the government of the country since his death has been in Conservative hands. This may be regarded as the measure of his success.

CHAPTER XVIII

GLADSTONE'S LATER MINISTRIES

✓THE second Gladstone administration, which lasted from 1880 to 1885, did not attempt so many reforms as the first. While its record was not barren of legislative achievement, its attention was mainly directed towards Irish affairs and events in Egypt and South Africa.

In the first year of its existence the Government passed an Employers' Liability Act, the object of which was to enable workmen who were injured in the course of their employment to obtain compensation from their employers, provided that the injury was due to the negligence of the employer himself or of his manager or foreman. The Act was not very effective, since workmen were allowed to "contract out" of it, and they often did so in order to obtain employment. But it is noteworthy as being the first of a series of enactments on the subject of workmen's compensation—measures designed to establish the principle that the cost of the casualties of industry should be a charge upon industry. In the same year the Burials Act was passed; this gave to Nonconformists the right of burial in churchyards with their own form of service.

The Married Women's Property Act was passed in 1882. Until this time the property and earnings of a married woman were in the control of her husband, who could deal with them as though they were his own. The Act remedied this state of affairs by giving the married woman the right to deal with her own possessions.

The Corrupt and Illegal Practices Act, of 1883, was devised to suppress corruption at elections. Corruption was not now so common as in earlier times, and it had declined very much since the passing of the Ballot Act. Unscrupulous candidates and their agents were less likely to attempt to bribe electors if they had no certainty that the bargain would be kept. Nevertheless, it was by no means extinct, as was shown by the report of a Bribery Commission appointed in 1881. The Act of 1883 defined corrupt practices as including bribery, treating, intimidation, and impersonation, and it prescribed a maximum of

expenditure which might be incurred by candidates at elections. Heavy penalties were imposed for breaches of the Act.

By far the most important enactment carried by the second Gladstone ministry was the third Parliamentary Reform Act. Actually, this consisted of two distinct measures, dealing respectively with the franchise and with the redistribution of seats; the former was passed in 1884 and the latter in 1885. The outstanding feature of the Franchise Act was the extension to county constituencies of household franchise, which had existed in towns since 1867. The effect was to confer the vote upon the agricultural labourer, so that the government of the country was at last established upon a fully democratic basis. The Redistribution Act provided that towns with less than 15,000 people should not be separately represented but should be merged in their counties, those with from 15,000 to 50,000 people should have one member, those with from 50,000 to 165,000 people should have two members, while counties and towns of more than 165,000 people were split up into single-member divisions of roughly equal size. Even these arrangements fell short of equality in the size of constituencies. It will be noticed that while a town of 16,000 people was entitled to one member a town of 160,000 people was represented by only two.

✓ Difficulties in South Africa with which the second Gladstone ministry had to deal were inherited from its predecessor. The war which resulted from the determination of the Boers to recover their independence is described elsewhere in this book, and it is necessary to remark here merely that the granting of the demands of the Boers after their victories over small British forces at Laing's Nek and Majuba Hill bore the appearance of acceptance of defeat. It lowered British prestige in South Africa, and it exposed the Government to criticism at home.

✓ Egyptian affairs caused much trouble to the Government. Egyptian finances had, since 1879, been in effect under joint Anglo-French control, but the presence of foreigners in the land caused among the Egyptians irritation which developed into an armed outbreak in 1882. The French Government declined to co-operate with the British in its suppression, and the latter was compelled to act alone in restoring order. Admiral Seymour bombarded Alexandria, and Sir Garnet Wolseley defeated the Egyptians at Tel-el-Kebir and occupied Cairo. Arabi, the leader of the rising, was exiled to Ceylon.

The suppression of the disturbance of 1882 left Egypt in a state of ferment which made impossible the immediate withdrawal of British troops. There was no intention of maintaining permanent control over the country, but the task of reorganising the Egyptian Government and strengthening the finances proved to be greater than was anticipated, and withdrawal from Egypt was postponed indefinitely. The British occupation of Egypt and the cessation of the Dual Control were resented by France, and it was not until the Anglo-French Convention of 1904 that full recognition of the British position in Egypt was accorded by France (in return for British recognition of certain French claims in Morocco).

✓ The Sudan was a province to the south of Egypt. Some garrisons were stationed at isolated spots to keep order. In 1883 an outbreak of religious fanaticism occurred; the Mahdi, a "prophet," whose followers were called Dervishes, took up arms and defeated a body of Egyptian troops, their leader, Hicks Pasha, a British general, being slain. The forces in the Sudan were evidently too small to withstand the Mahdi, and it was decided to withdraw them. General Gordon was sent to the Sudan for the purpose of supervising the evacuation. Many people were sent down the Nile, but Gordon's position in Khartoum became critical. The dispatch of a relief expedition was considered by the British Government. Time was wasted in considering alternative routes; preparations were slow; the expedition was too large and was hindered by lack of transport; it was reduced in size; when it was nearing its goal a delay of three days occurred in the substitution of Sudanese troops for Egyptian. Khartoum was at last reached—one day after Gordon had been slain by Dervishes. The Sudan was abandoned to the followers of the Mahdi for many years. Public indignation at the blundering which had led to so tragic a result was very great, and the Government escaped censure in the House of Commons by only fourteen votes.

✓ An advance of Russian troops towards Afghanistan and their occupation of Penjdeh, an Afghan valley, brought Great Britain and Russia to the verge of war in 1885. Preparations were made for war, though negotiations for a delimitation of the Afghan frontier were set on foot. The matter was not settled until 1887, when Lord Salisbury was Prime Minister, Penjdeh being left in Russian hands.

The question which occupied the greater part of the attention ✓

of the second Gladstone ministry was that of Ireland. In 1870 a Home Rule League, which aimed at securing the establishment of a separate Irish Parliament, was formed under the leadership of Isaac Butt, and, later, of Charles Stewart Parnell. Agitation continued, and in 1879 a Land League came into existence which was much more violent than the Home Rule League in its methods. Outrages became common, and, before long, boycotting was introduced. English land agents in Ireland and Irish farmers who submitted to their extortions were cut off from local society as completely as possible. Nobody would associate with them, local shopkeepers would not serve them, and, if they attempted to import food and other necessities of life from England, people in Ireland would not forward the goods. The disorders were so extensive that early in 1881 a Protection of Property Act (commonly called a Coercion Act) was passed, permitting the arrest of agitators and their imprisonment without trial, and an Arms Act which prohibited the possession of arms and ammunition by the inhabitants of districts proclaimed as disorderly.

In 1881 Gladstone's second Irish Land Act was passed. This was aimed especially at rack-renting, and was based on the "Three F's"—fair rents, fixity of tenure, and free sale of tenants' rights. Land courts were established, to which Irish tenants might apply for the fixing of their rents. Such rents were to remain unchanged for fifteen years, and during that period the advantage of improvements effected by the tenant would remain with him. The tenant could not be evicted except for non-payment of the rent, and if he wished to leave he was empowered to sell his interest in the holding to his successor. The landlord, however, retained some right of objecting to the new-comer, and was privileged to exercise a prior right of purchase. The advantage which might have been gained from the Act was largely nullified by the disorders of the next few years. Numerous arrests were made under the Protection of Property Act. Parnell and some of his followers made provocative speeches, and at length he and six other Irish members were arrested and imprisoned in Kilmainham jail. The Land League issued a no-rent manifesto, calling upon Irish tenant farmers to refuse to pay rent.

The Irish members were confined for more than six months, but at length an informal understanding (popularly known as the Kilmainham Treaty) was reached between them and the

Government; they were to be released and they undertook to discourage violence and boycotting. Forster, the Chief Secretary for Ireland, resigned rather than make terms with law-breakers. His successor was Lord Frederick Cavendish, who, with the Under-Secretary, Thomas Henry Burke, was murdered in Phoenix Park, Dublin, a few days after his appointment, by a man named Brady. Parnell denounced the crime, but a second and more severe Coercion Act was inevitable. It conferred special powers of search upon the police, and it authorised the establishment of special tribunals for the trial of offenders. It was accompanied by an Arrears Act, by which arrears of rent might be cancelled, the state compensating landlords to the extent of half the loss. By these measures ministers pleased nobody. Conservatives objected to the Arrears Act and the Irish party resented the Coercion Act. Outrages continued for some time, despite the attitude of Parnell and his followers, who refrained from giving the law-breakers open encouragement, but the firm administration of the Coercion Act was not without effect, and some degree of order was at length restored.

His best friends could hardly contend that Gladstone's conduct of national affairs had been attended with success. Prestige had been lost in South Africa, where the right thing had been done in the worst possible way, in the Sudan, where vacillation and delay had resulted in the death of Gordon and the loss of the province, in Afghanistan, where war with Russia had only narrowly been averted, and in Ireland, where if peace had been restored for a time this had not been achieved by the remedying of grievances and the restoration of prosperity. Yet, though the Government had lost popularity, its fall was not brought about by any of these issues. In a division in the course of a debate on the budget of 1885 the Irish members joined with the Conservatives, and the Government was defeated.

Gladstone's failure was not due to incapacity, as his opponents suggested, but to the nature of the problems with which he had to deal. He was no imperialist, and he had little interest in foreign affairs beyond a desire to maintain international peace. His efforts to deal fairly with Ireland had been met with lawlessness and violence, and he was on the way to being convinced that the Irish problem demanded a far more fundamental solution than any that had yet been put forward by British statesmen.

Lord Salisbury became Prime Minister in July, 1885, without a parliamentary majority. By agreement between the parties the general election did not take place until nearly the end of the year. The result of the polls, in which for the first time the agricultural labourers cast their votes, showed that in spite of the record of his ministry Gladstone had by no means lost the support of the people of Great Britain. The Liberals numbered exactly half the new House of Commons, the other half consisting of Conservatives and Irish Nationalists. The Conservatives hoped for Irish support, but their expressed intention of introducing a new Coercion Bill drove the Irish into opposition, and the Salisbury Government was defeated.

Gladstone became Prime Minister for the third time in January, 1886. He had already announced his conversion to the principle of Home Rule for Ireland, and he thus secured the firm support of the Irish members. But dissensions appeared in the Liberal party. Lord Hartington (afterwards Duke of Devonshire) and Mr. Goschen declined to take office, and though Joseph Chamberlain accepted he soon resigned. The first Home Rule Bill was introduced in April, 1886, and through the defection of over ninety Liberal members it was defeated by 343 votes to 313. The Liberal Unionists continued in association with the Conservatives at the general election, which went heavily against the Government. Gladstone resigned, and Lord Salisbury became Prime Minister for the second time.

Gladstone and his party were in opposition for the next six years, but the general election of 1892 gave him, with the support of the Irish, a majority of forty in the House of Commons. He was now eighty-three years of age, and only his determination to complete his policy towards Ireland induced him to take office as premier for the fourth time. His second Home Rule Bill was introduced in 1893. It differed in some respects from the first Bill, the changes being such as to emphasise the supremacy of the Parliament at Westminster. It was carried in the Commons after long and angry debates, but the House of Lords rejected it on second reading by 419 votes to 41.

Gladstone continued in office for some months longer, but his life's work was at an end. Before he retired, a Local Government Act was passed to complete the new framework of local government begun by the County Councils Act of 1888. This offered another occasion of disagreement between Lords and Commons, the Lords insisting on certain amendments to

the measure. Gladstone made public protest against the action of the peers in rejecting and amending bills which had received the approval of the Commons, but he led no crusade against the upper chamber. He probably realised that the country would not support him—that on the Home Rule issue the peers had interpreted the feeling of the nation more accurately than had the Liberals. And his physical powers were failing; eyesight and hearing were affected; he was an old man. His resignation in February, 1894, brought to an end a political career which had lasted more than sixty years and had included four premierships. He retained his membership of the House of Commons until the general election of 1895, though he ceased to attend. He died in 1898.

Gladstone was one of the greatest figures in England in the nineteenth century. His political career almost exactly coincided with the reign of Queen Victoria, who was never in sympathy with him, and who disapproved of many of his proposals. The disestablishment of the Irish Church was viewed by her with dismay, though she exerted her influence to prevent the development of a constitutional crisis over the question. Other measures proposed by him were distasteful to her, and she was profoundly thankful that his schemes for Home Rule met with no success. Yet Gladstone was no radical. His instincts were aristocratic and conservative, and it is a matter for speculation whether his political life would not have been more congenial if he had been the leader of an enlightened and progressive Conservative party. Some of his views failed to commend themselves to the people of this country; yet by a large number of people he was not merely respected but revered, and in the end his political opponents vied with his followers in paying tribute to his greatness, recognising in him a great scholar, a great orator, a great financier, a great parliamentarian, a great man.

CHAPTER XIX

LORD SALISBURY

THE Marquis of Salisbury, who held the premiership three times, was the last member of the House of Lords to fill that office. As Lord Robert Cecil he entered the House of Commons in 1853. Some years later, through the death of his elder brother, he became Lord Cranborne, and heir to the marquissate of Salisbury. His first ministerial appointment was as Secretary of State for India in the third Derby-Disraeli ministry, but he resigned office in consequence of his dislike of Disraeli's proposals for parliamentary reform. His speeches against the Bill of 1867 enhanced his reputation, and in 1868 he succeeded to the marquissate and entered the House of Lords. In the second Disraeli ministry Salisbury resumed the office of Secretary of State for India, and in 1878 he became Foreign Secretary. In this capacity he accompanied the Prime Minister to Berlin, and shared with him responsibility for decisions reached there. The death of Lord Beaconsfield in 1881, a year after his fall from power, left the leadership of the Conservative party in Salisbury's hands.

On the fall of the second Gladstone ministry in July, 1885, Salisbury became Prime Minister, but without the support of a majority in the House of Commons. The recently passed Parliamentary Reform Acts did not come into force till November, so that it was hardly possible to hold a general election until then. The Liberal Opposition, though in a majority, refrained from defeating the "Government of caretakers," which in the period which was bound to elapse before the election passed some useful measures. An act was passed to facilitate the demolition of slum dwellings and the erection of better houses for the working classes. A Land Purchase Act, introduced by the Lord Chancellor, Lord Ashbourne, enabled Irish tenant farmers to purchase their holdings, the money being advanced by the Government and being repayable in instalments over a period of forty-nine years. Meanwhile, negotiations were being carried on by politicians of both parties

with Parnell, the Irish leader. The Government announced its decision not to renew the Coercion Act, and as a result the Irish vote in Great Britain was, in the main, given to Conservative candidates at the general election.

The result of the election was disappointing to the Conservatives. The Liberals secured 335 seats, exactly half the House of Commons, the Conservatives 249, and the Irish 86. The Conservatives, even with Irish support, had no clear majority; if the Irish turned against them they would inevitably be beaten. The lapse of the Coercion Act had been followed by a renewal of boycotting, and soon after the meeting of the new Parliament it was announced by the Government that a new Coercion Bill would be introduced. The Irish members withdrew their support, the Government was defeated, and Lord Salisbury resigned.

Gladstone's third ministry followed. As related elsewhere, his conversion to Home Rule secured for him Irish support but lost that of the Unionist wing of his own party. His Home Rule Bill was defeated, and he dissolved Parliament. In the general election the Liberals secured only 191 seats and the Irish 85, while the Conservatives numbered 316 and the Liberal Unionists 78.

Lord Salisbury resumed office in July, 1886. The election had not given the Conservatives an absolute majority, and they were forced to rely upon Liberal Unionist support. The Liberal Unionists declined to accept seats in the cabinet, and for a time there seemed to be a possibility of their reunion with the Gladstonians. This was not to be, and the Liberal Unionist party continued to vote with the Conservatives.

Within a few months of the formation of the ministry the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Lord Randolph Churchill, resigned office on account of his disapproval of the demands of his colleagues at the Admiralty and the War Office for additional expenditure on national defence. Lord Randolph, who as a champion of "Tory democracy" was eager for social reform, believed himself to be indispensable to the ministry, and he expected that he would be invited to return to office on his own terms. But Lord Salisbury met the crisis by offering the Exchequer to a Liberal Unionist, Mr. G. J. Goschen. Churchill continued to support the Government as a private member, but he never again held office.

Irish affairs continued to engage the attention of the Govern-

ment. Many of the Irish felt that their rents, even as fixed by the land courts, were too high, and unrest was increased by their disappointment at the failure of the Home Rule Bill. A "Plan of Campaign" was organised by which Irish tenant farmers were advised to withhold payment of rent. This was accompanied by a renewal of disturbances and outrages. The new Chief Secretary for Ireland was Arthur James Balfour, a nephew of the Prime Minister. He proved to be fully equal to the situation. A new Coercion Act was passed in 1887, but it was accompanied by an Irish Land Act which provided a measure of relief to highly rented tenants. This partial removal of Irish grievances, together with Balfour's firmness in maintaining order, did much to bring about the collapse of the agitation. A year or two later Balfour visited Ireland to investigate for himself conditions of life among the peasantry, and as a result further measures were taken for the relief of distress. Balfour's determination to rule fairly and firmly and to remedy genuine grievances won for him, if not popularity, at least the respect of the Irish people.

The Irish question entered upon a new phase at this time. In the spring of 1887 *The Times* published a series of articles under the title "Parnellism and Crime," in which it was asserted that Parnell and his followers had incited his compatriots to commit outrages. A facsimile of a letter bearing his name was published, in which approval of the murder of Burke in Phoenix Park was expressed, with some measure of regret at that of Cavendish. Parnell in Parliament denounced the letter as a forgery. In a libel action brought by one of his friends against *The Times* counsel for the newspaper produced further letters. A Commission was appointed by Act of Parliament to investigate the charges against Parnell and other Irish members of Parliament. It sat for more than a year, and pronounced that the facsimile letter was forged by a man named Pigott (who committed suicide). But the Commission also found that leading Irish members, including Parnell, O'Brien, Davitt, and Dillon, had encouraged action and agitation which were bound to lead to violence and outrage. *The Times* had to pay the costs of the Commission, which were said to amount to £250,000, and it paid £5,000 damages to Parnell in settlement of an action for libel.

Parnell's doubtful triumph was short-lived. For the moment the alliance between the Irish and the Liberals seemed firmer

than ever, but in 1889 discreditable revelations were made concerning Parnell's private life. He was proved to have been guilty of immoral conduct, and the Liberal party, fearing the loss of Nonconformist support, hesitated to continue relations with the Irish while Parnell remained their leader. The Irish, for their part, disapproved of his conduct, and by a majority he was deposed from the leadership of the party. A minority remained faithful to him, and the Irish party henceforth was split into Parnellites and Anti-Parnellites, the Gladstonians remaining in alliance with the latter. The effect of the split was to weaken Irish influence in English politics for many years to come. Parnell died in 1891.

In the summer of 1887 Queen Victoria completed the fiftieth year of her reign, and her Jubilee was celebrated with general rejoicing. There was a great manifestation of loyalty throughout the British Empire, and the first Colonial Conference met in London. The colonial representatives were gratified at the cordial reception they received, and the effect was to improve the relations between Great Britain and her colonies.

Lord Salisbury was, except for the first few months of his ministry, his own Foreign Secretary. The German Empire was governed by Bismarck until his fall in 1890, after which the Emperor William II directed its policy. A Triple Alliance of Germany, Austria, and Italy had been formed in 1882, and France, isolated in Europe since the Franco-Prussian War, began to look to Russia for assistance, though the Dual Alliance was not formally concluded until 1895. In this period, during which the powers of Europe were beginning to range themselves in two armed camps, Lord Salisbury refrained from committing Great Britain to either. Her interests were not identical with those of either group. With Germany there were differences in regard to the delimitation of spheres of influence in Africa; these, however, were settled in 1890 by an agreement in which German claims to Uganda and the Upper Nile were abandoned, a British protectorate over Zanzibar was recognised, and Heligoland was ceded to Germany. The French Government represented the British occupation of Egypt, but some improvement in Anglo-French relations followed the recognition by the French, in 1890, of the British protectorate over Zanzibar in return for British recognition of the French protectorate over Madagascar.

Cecil Rhodes, an Englishman who had gone to South Africa

and made a great fortune in connection with the Kimberley diamond mines, secured from chiefs of the Mashonas and Matabele concessions which opened up vast territories to British influence and settlement—territories soon to be known as Rhodesia. The British Government was reluctant to face the expense and responsibility involved in such extensive schemes, and Rhodes secured from it a charter for the British South African Company, to which was entrusted the administration of these regions. In 1890 Rhodes became Prime Minister of Cape Colony. The Portuguese resented the British occupation of Rhodesia, putting forward claims to it, and incidents occurred on the frontier. But Lord Salisbury acted firmly, and Portugal at length recognised British rights over territories in dispute, her reasonable claims being fairly met.

British finances were in so satisfactory a condition that in 1888 Mr. Goschen was able to bring about a conversion of the National Debt. For many years past interest had been paid on the debt at the rate of three per cent; it was now reduced to two and three-quarters per cent, with a proviso that in fifteen years there should be a further reduction to two and a half per cent. In 1890 a budget surplus of over three million pounds enabled the Chancellor of the Exchequer to reduce taxation, and though the duty on spirits was increased the money so obtained was not retained by the Government but was granted to county councils for the purpose of technical education. A further surplus in 1891 was used for the abolition of fees in public elementary schools, so that elementary education, compulsory since 1876, now became free.

Probably the most important legislative achievement of the second Salisbury ministry was the Local Government Act of 1888, by which "administrative counties" were brought into existence and county councils were established. All large towns were made into county boroughs, and their councils were given "county powers." The Act is described in detail in another chapter.

The Government had a creditable record of social legislation. By the Merchandise Marks Act of 1887 it was made compulsory for the country of origin of goods of foreign manufacture imported into Great Britain to be indicated, in order that foreign goods might not be sold as of British production. The Allotments Act of 1887 compelled local authorities to provide allotments for working men who wished to cultivate them.

The Employers' Liability Act which had been passed in 1880 was in 1888 extended to include seamen. In 1889, by the Technical Instruction Act, county councils and county borough councils were empowered to establish technical schools and evening classes. The scope of the Artisans' Dwellings Act of 1875 was extended in 1890, and further slum clearance was effected. An important Factory and Workshops Act was passed in 1891, and in it the whole subject of factory regulation was reviewed. The minimum age of child labour in factories and workshops was raised to eleven; safety rules were drawn up for application in dangerous trades; and outworkers became subject to inspection. By the Small Holdings Act of 1892 county councils were empowered to purchase land and sell it on easy terms to applicants for small holdings, in farms of from one to fifty acres. It was thought to be desirable to encourage the revival of a class of peasant proprietors; for various reasons the small holdings movement has not been a success.

Such measures as these were indications of a change which was coming over the political scene—a change of which politicians were not yet fully conscious. The enfranchisement of the working classes, in 1867 and 1884, had enhanced their political importance, and neither party could afford to neglect them. Some important political questions still awaited solution, but social problems were coming to the front, and it was inevitable that both parties should try to attract support by their efforts to improve working-class conditions. If the nineteenth century had been an era of political advance it was likely that the twentieth would be a time of social progress, the beginning of which could be noticed before the twentieth century had dawned. This, however, was imperfectly apprehended at the time. Though some of the Conservatives were, in the Disraelian tradition, desirous of promoting the prosperity of the working classes and removing the hardships of their condition, the more truly Tory section of the party was mainly concerned with the maintenance of aristocratic privilege. On the Liberal side the radical wing was willing to go far, but Whig traditions caused the mass of Liberals to look askance at "socialistic" proposals.

In 1891, at a Liberal conference at Newcastle, a programme was drawn up for the general election. It included the disestablishment of the Church in Wales, local veto on the sale of

alcoholic liquors, the abolition of plural voting, and the extension of employers' liability. As a tactical move the issue of the programme was not a success. It was intended to attract the support of Nonconformists, teetotallers, and trade unionists; its effect was to antagonise Churchmen, the manufacturers' organisations, and the brewing interest, while not a few Liberals viewed the programme as a whole with suspicion. The general election was held in the summer of 1892, and though the Liberals gained ground, the extent of their success was disappointing to them. Only with the aid of over eighty Irish Nationalist votes could they command a majority of forty in the House of Commons. When Parliament met a vote of no confidence in the Salisbury Government was carried, and the Prime Minister resigned.

The history of the fourth Gladstone ministry (1892-4) is related elsewhere. Upon Gladstone's resignation in 1894 his Foreign Secretary, Lord Rosebery, became Prime Minister, and carried on the Government for another year. More important than any legislative achievement of the Rosebery ministry was the budget of 1894, in which the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Sir William Harcourt, made substantial changes in the character and amount of the death duties. An attempt was made in 1895 to bring forward measures which had been mentioned in the Newcastle programme. A Welsh Disestablishment Bill and a Local Veto Bill were introduced; neither became law. The Government was weakened by the loss of several by-elections, and its nominal majority was reduced to twenty-eight. In the course of the session it was defeated on a minor matter, and Lord Rosebery resigned.

Lord Salisbury became Prime Minister for the third time in June, 1895. Parliament was dissolved, and the Conservatives and Liberal Unionists gained a majority of more than one hundred and fifty over their opponents. The ministry differed in one important respect from that of 1886-92. It contained Liberal Unionists as well as Conservatives, whereas the earlier ministry was composed solely of Conservatives (except Mr. Goschen). This change was indicative of the approaching fusion of the two parties into one. The Liberal Unionist ministers included the Duke of Devonshire as Lord President of the Council, Mr. Goschen as First Lord of the Admiralty, and Mr. Joseph Chamberlain as Colonial Secretary. Lord Salisbury again held the office of Foreign Secretary, and his

nephew, Mr. Balfour, became First Lord of the Treasury and Leader of the House of Commons.

Though the legislative achievements of the third Salisbury ministry were not remarkable they were not altogether insignificant. A Workmen's Compensation Act, passed in 1896, secured for workmen compensation for injuries incurred in the course of their employment, irrespective of any question of negligence, and contracting out of its operation was forbidden; in these respects the Act marked a great advance on the Employers' Liability Act of 1880. The continuance of agricultural depression led to the passing, in 1896, of the Agricultural Rates Act, by which farmers were relieved, to the extent of three-quarters, of the payment of rates upon their land. This measure was adversely criticised by the Liberals, who contended that in the long run the relief would find its way to the landlords in the form of increased rents. In 1897 an increase in the amount of government grant to voluntary schools was sanctioned; it being felt that these establishments were encountering financial difficulty by comparison with board schools, which were partly maintained out of the rates. In 1898 some measure of self-government was conceded to Ireland by the extension to that land of the system of county councils which was already in operation in Great Britain, and in 1899 London, which had become an administrative county under the Act of 1888, was divided into Metropolitan Boroughs. Some further Factory Acts, in 1895 and 1898, extended the operation of factory law to such places as docks, wharves, and laundries, and formulated special regulations for a number of dangerous occupations, and a Factory and Workshops Act of 1901 codified the whole of the law on this subject.

The Diamond Jubilee of Queen Victoria, in 1897, afforded an opportunity for another manifestation of national and imperial loyalty to the Crown. The presence of colonial representatives in London made possible the holding of another colonial conference, and many subjects of common interest were discussed.

Lord Salisbury directed the foreign policy of Great Britain with vigour and success. In declining to seek alliances he avoided entanglements, though there was some ground for the view that the policy of "splendid isolation" could not be maintained for ever.

For many years the boundary between the colony of British

Guiana and the republic of Venezuela had been unsettled, certain territory being claimed by both powers. The question became acute in 1895, when the Venezuelans arrested two British officials within the disputed territory. The British Government protested, but the President of the United States, Grover Cleveland, intervened, and revived the Monroe doctrine of 1823. He demanded that Great Britain should submit her claim against Venezuela to the arbitration of the United States. For a short time there was danger of war between Great Britain and the United States, but Lord Salisbury acted with great wisdom and firmness. He offered to submit the British case to the American Government in order to demonstrate its justice, but declined to be bound by any American decision. A mixed arbitration tribunal was appointed, and its decision in 1899 was in favour of the British claim.

Between 1894 and 1896 news of Turkish outrages in Armenia startled and horrified the people of Great Britain and other countries of Europe. There was a demand for action to be taken against the Turks on behalf of the oppressed people, but Lord Salisbury was unwilling to act alone, lest at some other time Russia should claim a similar right to intervene in Turkish affairs. As Russia on this occasion was unwilling to take action in concert with Great Britain, nothing was done.

The death of Gordon in 1885 had never been avenged, and for many years the Sudan had been abandoned to the Dervishes. The construction of a railway in Egypt in the direction of the Sudan enabled the reconquest of the province to be undertaken. The expedition was under the command of Sir Herbert (afterwards Lord) Kitchener. The Dervishes were overthrown at the Battle of Omdurman in 1898, and Khartoum was reoccupied. The Sudan within a few years became a peaceful and prosperous province under joint British and Egyptian administration.

Not long after the conquest of the Sudan a French expedition under Major Marchand occupied Fashoda on the Upper Nile. War between Great Britain and France appeared to be imminent, but Marchand was withdrawn, and a conflict was averted.

In 1895 friction between Boers and Uitlanders led to the ill-advised Jameson Raid. This incident and the South African War which took place between 1899 and 1902 are described elsewhere.

For some years negotiations for a federation of the Australian colonies were in progress. At length they reached a successful

issue, and the Australian Commonwealth Act was passed in 1900 with the assent of all parties. The Commonwealth came into existence on the first day of the twentieth century. ♀

The Australian Commonwealth Act was the last act of importance to which the royal assent was signified by Queen Victoria. In January, 1901, she died, after a reign of nearly sixty-four years. Her retirement from public life for some years after the death of the Prince Consort in 1861 had caused some loss of popularity, but this was fully recovered in her later years. She was not a woman of great intellectual power, but she had a strong sense of duty and was keenly conscious of the responsibility of her position. She was always desirous of promoting the well-being of her people; she retained to the end her interest in public affairs, and she never interpreted her position as a constitutional monarch as involving unquestioning submission to her ministers. Gladstone, the premier with whom she was most frequently in disagreement, placed on record his opinion that her influence on public affairs was considerable, and was beneficial to the country. Perhaps the greatest service rendered by her to the country lay in the high moral standard upon which she insisted. She rescued the monarchy and the court from the moral degradation which had prevailed in the time of her immediate predecessors, and she probably saved the monarchy from extinction. She set an example to her people, and won not only their respect and admiration but their reverence and love.

The new king, Edward VII, was almost sixty years of age. He was a sportsman, a traveller, and a man of the world. In the later years of his mother's reign some of the ceremonial duties which were associated with the monarchy had devolved upon him, but Victoria had been unwilling to let him participate in public affairs, so that he came to the throne with little experience of and no training for the work which lay before him. Yet he devoted himself with success to the duties of his position, and retained his popularity throughout his reign.

The Parliament elected in 1895 was dissolved in the autumn of 1900, shortly before the Queen's death. The South African War was in progress, and the Conservatives were victorious in the election, their majority even being slightly increased. Lord Salisbury continued in office as Prime Minister, but he yielded the Foreign Secretaryship to Lord Lansdowne. He was now old, and his health was failing. He hoped to retain office

until after the coronation of Edward VII, which was to take place in June, 1902. The King's sudden and serious illness caused the postponement of the ceremony, which took place in August. Salisbury was unable to hold on, and in July he retired, dying a year later. In the roll of British statesmen he ranks higher as a foreign minister than as a prime minister. In the former capacity he showed wisdom and vigour; in the latter he exercised too little control over his colleagues and was hardly interested in their work. His personal character was in the best aristocratic tradition. He was no demagogue, and he had little faith in democracy. He was not a self-seeker, and he had a high sense of duty; he was satisfied with the firm belief that his whole line of conduct was for the good of the state.

CHAPTER XX

BALFOUR 1902-0

ARTHUR JAMES BALFOUR, a nephew of Lord Salisbury, was a distinguished figure in British politics for over fifty years. He became a member of the House of Commons in 1875, and in the early eighties he was associated with Lord Randolph Churchill, Sir John Gorst, and other young Conservatives in the "Fourth Party," a group which was more advanced than the main body of the party and which desired to press on social reform in the Disraelian tradition. As Chief Secretary for Ireland in the second Salisbury ministry he won a great reputation for courage, honesty, steadfastness of purpose, and determination; his resolve to maintain order and enforce obedience to law secured for him the approbation of his party, his resolve to investigate grievances and remove their cause, the respect of his opponents. He led the Conservative opposition to the fourth Gladstone ministry with vigour and success. In the third Salisbury ministry he was First Lord of the Treasury and Leader of the House of Commons, and when Lord Salisbury was compelled to lay down the burden of office Balfour was inevitably his successor. He was Prime Minister from 1902 to 1905, but his premiership was in some ways the least successful part of his political career.

Only a month after he became Prime Minister the postponed coronation of King Edward VII took place. Only the very aged could remember a coronation, and this was an occasion of pageantry fully equal to that of the Jubilees of Queen Victoria. The presence of colonial representatives in London provided the opportunity of holding another Colonial Conference. The Colonial Secretary, Joseph Chamberlain, presided, and put forward suggestions for Imperial Federation. Nothing was agreed upon in this connection, but the conference discussed imperial defence and recommended an extension of preferential tariffs within the Empire. It was felt that Colonial Conferences ought not to be limited to occasions on which great state

functions were to take place, and it was decided that meetings should be held, if possible, at intervals of four years.

^ The outstanding legislative achievement of 1902, and, indeed, of the ministry, was the Education Act. The School Boards set up by the Act of 1870 were abolished, and the control of public education was transferred to county councils and town councils, which were to exercise their powers through Education Committees. All public elementary schools, whether voluntary or provided, were to be maintained by the Education Committee of the place. The religious body which had established a voluntary school was permitted to give religious instruction of a sectarian nature in it; many Nonconformists objected to the maintenance from the rates of schools in which teaching distinctive of the Church of England or the Roman Catholic Church was given. An important feature of the Act of 1902 was the recognition of public secondary education, in consequence of which municipal and county secondary schools were established. London was excluded from the operation of the Act; by a separate Act in the following year the London School Board was abolished, and the educational system of the metropolis was placed under an Education Committee of the London County Council.

The Irish question was carried a stage nearer solution by the passing in 1903 of a Land Purchase Act introduced by George Wyndham. Conservatives fully admitted the existence of Irish agrarian grievances—high rents, evictions, etc.—and believed that the only effective remedy was to make the Irish cultivator the owner of his farm. The idea was not new, but it was dealt with in a far more comprehensive manner in this than in previous acts. The sum of £180,000,000 was raised and used for the purchase of Irish estates. Tenant-farmers were enabled to buy their farms at reasonable prices, which they would meet by instalments spread over a period of sixty-eight years. The Act was a brilliant success. Evictions and other grievances of Irish tenant farmers ceased, and terms of purchase proved to be so reasonable that the amount of default in the repayments of instalments was inconsiderable.

The only remaining measure of importance passed by the Balfour ministry was the Licensing Act of 1904. The holders of licences for the sale of alcoholic liquors were compelled to contribute to a fund out of which compensation was to be paid to those whose licences were extinguished. In this way the

number of public houses could be reduced without injustice to their owners and without a charge on the public funds. The Act was fiercely opposed, on the ground that permanent value was thereby given to licences which hitherto had been granted only from year to year.

The Balfour ministry was remarkable for a fundamental change in British foreign policy—the abandonment of “splendid isolation.”—Great Britain and France had not been at war since 1815, and in the Crimean War, the one European war in which Great Britain had been involved since 1815, she had fought in alliance with France. Yet the two countries were not friendly. Many small causes of friction existed, and occasionally war threatened. A definite attempt was made to clear up these matters and to bring about a better understanding. Popular opinion attributed the success of the effort to the personal intervention of King Edward, who was well known and very popular in France. To what extent popular opinion was correct it is impossible to state. It is certain that the King did not overstep the bounds of constitutional propriety; the negotiation of a treaty is a matter for ministers and not for kings. But it is probable that in many ways he assisted the negotiations, his long experience of public life and his personal popularity with the French people contributing to their success. The Anglo-French Convention of 1904 settled various matters in dispute between the two countries. France at last recognised the British position in Egypt; Great Britain recognised the French position in Morocco. The vexed question of the French fishing rights in the Gulf of St. Lawrence was settled, and coming promises and adjustments were made in regard to outstanding questions in West Africa and Siam. The better understanding between the two countries developed into the Anglo-French Entente. The Entente was not an alliance; neither country was bound to assist the other in the event of attack. But it substituted friendliness for enmity. The position of France in Europe was certainly stronger, and Great Britain was no longer in utter isolation.

In 1903 the Colonial Secretary, Joseph Chamberlain, put forward a policy which he called tariff reform, and which was, in substance, a reversal of free trade. He drew attention to the unwillingness of other countries to adopt a free trade policy; while British manufactured goods were being excluded from foreign markets by the operation of high tariffs, foreign

manufactured goods, often produced under conditions of sweated labour, poured into Great Britain, to the detriment of British industry. He ascribed the agricultural depression which had prevailed towards the close of the nineteenth century to the unrestricted import of cheap foreign and colonial corn and other foodstuffs. His ideal was a self-sufficient British Empire. He proposed that British industries should be protected by the imposition of duties on imported manufactured goods, and that British agriculture should be assisted by the establishment of a duty on imported wheat. In both branches of this programme colonial products were to receive preference—goods from the colonies were to be taxed at a lower rate or were to be admitted free of duty. Chamberlain's proposals were criticised by the Liberals, and they were received with little enthusiasm by his colleagues. A section of the Conservative party rallied to his support, but many members of the party remained attached to free trade, and between the two extremes were groups of various shades of opinion. The attitude of the Prime Minister was expressed in language of such obscurity that free traders regarded him as orthodox while protectionists claimed him as a convert. Possibly Balfour used language of intentional ambiguity in the hope of maintaining the unity of the party—but it was certain that the unity of the party was at an end.

b The tariff reform controversy seriously weakened the Government. Economists declared that Chamberlain's proposals were unsound; industrialists, especially in Lancashire, feared the loss of overseas markets; the working classes feared that the cost of living would be increased; the middle classes believed that any interference with free trade would be detrimental to national prosperity. Other circumstances contributed to the unpopularity of the Government. Certain army reforms which were undertaken included the abolition of the office of commander-in-chief, and this involved the retirement of Lord Roberts, the popular holder of the appointment. Nonconformists were still resentful at the Education Act and the Licensing Act. The policy of sanctioning the introduction of Chinese indentured labour into the gold mines of the Transvaal was characterised by its opponents as "Chinese slavery."

The Government clung to office as long as possible, but the by-elections went consistently against it, and in December, 1905, Balfour resigned. A Liberal Government was formed by Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, and Parliament was dis-

solved in January, 1906. The general election went strongly against the Conservatives. Balfour himself was defeated at Manchester, and when the new House met less than a quarter of its members were Conservatives. In this way the nation passed judgment on the record of the Balfour ministry.

CHAPTER XXI

THE LIBERAL REVIVAL

THE Parliament of 1906 contained a large majority of Liberals over all other parties, and it was noteworthy as being the first Parliament to contain a Labour party of appreciable size. The significance of the appearance in British political life of a new party which aimed at advanced political and social reform was, perhaps, not fully realised at the time, since the Government's majority was so large that it did not in any way depend on the Labour party for support. Nevertheless, the existence of the Labour party, in general support of the Government though not pledged to it, could not fail to influence the legislative programme of the ministry.

The Government was formed before the dissolution, and it included several men of distinction, three of whom afterwards held the office of Prime Minister. Sir Edward Grey was Foreign Secretary; H. H. Asquith was Chancellor of the Exchequer; David Lloyd George and Winston Churchill held lesser ministerial offices. Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman proved to be an admirable leader, but his health was already failing, and in 1908 he was succeeded by Mr. Asquith. Campbell-Bannerman died within a few weeks of his resignation.

The Liberals, having been excluded from office for ten years, eagerly embarked upon a lengthy programme of legislation, their first care being to attempt to amend those measures of the Balfour ministry to which their supporters had taken strong exception. In 1906 the Minister for Education, Augustine Birrell, introduced an Education Bill to amend the Act of 1902. Under its provisions the voluntary schools would have been virtually extinguished. It was bitterly opposed by Churchmen and Roman Catholics, and, though it passed the Commons, it was amended drastically by the House of Lords. Commons and Lords were unable to agree, and the Bill was dropped.

The fate of the Education Bill of 1906 indicated that the Conservatives, though defeated at the polls, were by no means prepared to let their political opponents have an unchallenged